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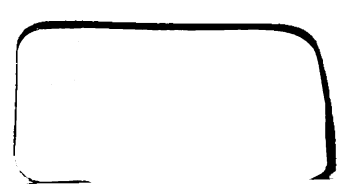

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MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

GEORGE ROMNEY,

INCLUDING

VARIOUS LETTERS, AND TESTIMONIES TO HIS GENIUS, &c.

ALSO, SOME PARTICULARS OF THE LIFE OF

PETER ROMNEY, HIS BROTHER;

A YOUNG ARTIST OF GREAT GENIUS AND PROMISING TALENTS, BUT OF SHORT LIFE.

Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And poverty's unconquerable bar.—BEATTIE.

Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi.—HORACE.

Nature scatters the seeds of genius to the winds, and though some may perish among the stony places of the world, and some be choked by the thorns and brambles of early adversity, yet others will now and then strike root even in the clefts of the rock, struggle bravely up into sunshine, and spread over their sterile birth-place all the beauties of vegetation.—GEOFFREY CRAYON.—*Sketch Book.*

BY THE REV. JOHN ROMNEY, B. D.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON;

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN AND CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1830.

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PREFACE.

THE author, when he first meditated these Memoirs, did not forget the judicious advice of Horace,

———versate diu, quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri;

and certainly should, under any other circumstances than those in which he was placed, have declined the undertaking: but when he considered how much he was bound by duty to protect the posthumous fame of his revered Relative, and saw with mortification that all the accounts which have been given both of him and of his works were either defective, false, or injurious; his scruples arising from diffidence soon yielded to a more powerful impulse, and he should have deemed himself guilty of very culpable indifference if he had not endeavoured to dispel the malignant cloud that hangs over his Father's memory, and to place his character in its true light; by giving publicity to the documents in his possession, and by relating such circumstances as were within his own knowledge respecting the life and works of so rare a genius, which in fact none but himself could

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communicate. Whatever, therefore, may be his defects, he flatters himself that the candid reader, in weighing his motives and duties, will acquit him of any unbecoming vanity or presumption. Had he foreseen during the life of Mr. Romney, that the duty of being his biographer would devolve upon himself, he certainly could have saved many interesting anecdotes and characteristic traits which are now absorbed in the impenetrable gulph of oblivion. Still, however, there may be some who may, notwithstanding, think that he has been too circumstantial: but as there is a curiosity in the public in general, to know every thing respecting men who have risen to eminence by the mere force of genius; if he had had no higher motive than to gratify this, he should have felt himself sufficiently justified in what he has done; but he had a more exalted object in view—he wished, as far as he was able, to trace out every step in the arduous path which leads to distinction, that future aspirants in that noble and fascinating art might know what they had to encounter, and how to overcome—for circumstances apparently trivial in themselves, often tend to illustrate the philosophy of the human mind, and to shew by what means genius advances to its maturity. Seward, in his *Anecdotes of distinguished persons,* (and he was no bad judge in these matters,) says "nothing is trifling in the history of genius." And a biographer of La Fontaine observes; "En effect, soustraire les petites circonstances

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de la vie d 'un homme illustre, c 'est, à mon avis, dérober un plaisir véritable aux lecteurs curieux, et les priver des moyens les plus surs de bien démêler ce qu 'il vaut."

The author may, perhaps, be thought to have expressed himself somewhat too strongly upon some occasions, he feels, however, that he has not transgressed the bounds which truth and justice prescribe; no tenderness for the feelings or memory of others ought to preclude him from doing justice to one, whose claims upon his protection were superior to every other consideration.

Something may, also, be required as explanatory for the tardiness of this publication. In fact, the author had no intention of writing Mr. Romney's life till many years after his decease, and was only induced to do it in consequence of the errors and misrepresentations of others; his bad health, also, contributed much to delay the performance; not to mention other impeding causes arising from different avocations. Even, when finished, it was retarded considerably on account of printing; till, at length, he met with a very intelligent printer in his own neighbourhood, who has acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the author, and he hopes also, to that of the public.

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, &c.

OF

GEORGE ROMNEY.

PART THE FIRST.

BEFORE I enter upon the Memoirs of Mr. Romney's life, it will, I presume, be expected that I should give some account of his immediate ancestors, partly to gratify simple curiosity and partly in order to ascertain how far the bias of his genius was influenced by family circumstances. Had it not been for this latter consideration, the particulars respecting his family might as well, perhaps, have been consigned to oblivion. The pride of pedigree is one of the most silly and vain of all pretensions, and such as can only influence men of little minds, who having nothing to boast of in themselves, seek to buoy up their consequence by a real, or pretended claim to a little antiquity. But even if ancestorial merit did exist, it reflects no honor on the descendant unless he himself be also meritorious. Mr. Romney had little to boast of on the score of pedigree; but surely it is much more honorable for a man to raise his family by his genius and talents, than to count a few generations of men, born to eat and sleep—

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fruges consumere nati,—whose first ancestor that emerged from obscurity was, perhaps, some miser, or oppressor, or one who had amassed wealth by some other disreputable means. Although Mr. Romney's progenitors were of humble rank, they were nevertheless respectable in society, and distinguished for virtuous habits and moral worth; and, if what Juvenal says be true,—*Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus*,—he might justly have been proud of distinctions in his family, more valuable and meritorious than riches or titles.

His grandfather, George, was born at the village of Colby, near Appleby, where his father had some property; but on account of the civil disturbances which prevailed in Appleby and its neighbourhood during the protectorate of Cromwell, he was induced at early age to leave his native place and migrate to Lancaster. Urged, probably, by the same motive, he soon quitted that town, retired across the sands, and established himself in Furness. He did not marry till he was sixty years of age, but, being a man of temperate habits, and blessed with a good constitution, he lived to see his children's children, and died at the very advanced age of ninety six. A younger brother of this George, being of a more enterprising disposition, accompanied King William to Ireland, and fought at the battle of the Boyne. He afterwards settled in Ireland, in the neighbourhood of Cork, and became steward to Lord Inchiquin; and some of his descendants continued in the same situation many years after. There were some other branches of the family who remained in Westmorland. Mr. Romney's father, John, was by trade a carpenter, joiner, and cabinet-maker, and of very extensive business. He was a man of mild and placid manners, retired and contemplative in his habits, correctly moral in his conduct, and unaffectedly pious. His

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notions of religion were just, being equally remote from cold philosophy and blind enthusiasm. I well remember his saying, though then a mere boy, that it was our interest to make up our minds to the faith of the christian religion; because, if it should not prove true, we were still benefited by it; but if it should, of which there was no good reason to doubt, how great then would be our recompense! The veneration in which I held this just man, will appear from the following circumstance, which I hope the candid reader will not be offended at my introducing here. I dreamt when at school, that a relation had come to inform me of his death; saying that there was inscribed on his coffin this motto, *sic perit flos rosæ fragrantis;* meaning, that, as the rose after it was withered still retained its fragrance, so the sweet odour of his inoffensive and pious life would survive his mortal remains. I have seen something like the sentiment since; but at the time, the idea and manner of expressing it were quite new to me. I place no faith in dreams, but, having heard of his illness, I attribute it entirely to the influence of my own reflections when awake*; it seemed, however, to have come upon me like a supernatural *afflatus*. The impression upon my mind was so strong, that the next day I told a schoolfellow, that, in consequence of a dream, I expected to hear of my grandfather's death;—which information came by the next post.—Ever, indeed, shall I feel grateful for the moral and religious impressions which I received in early youth from the precepts and example of this amiable progenitor; who by his strict probity, disinterestedness, and singleness of heart, had obtained among his acquaintance the characteristic epithet, *honest;* a title which had also been conferred upon his father before him.

* Maxime reliquiæ earum rerum moventur in animis et agitantur, de quibus vigilantes aut cogitavimus, aut egimus.—Cic. de Divin.

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Notwithstanding the disadvantages of his station and circumstances, he had nevertheless enriched his mind with much science and general knowledge. The books which he read, were above the capacity of common readers, and such as could only engage the attention of superior minds. In the line of his business he was remarkable for ingenious contrivance and practical skill. He had a taste for drawing, was an architect, an engineer, and an agriculturist. Every thing within the grasp of the human intellect, was an object of interest to his inquisitive mind. He was employed in constructing all the engines which were in use at that time for raising water from the neighbouring iron mines; and was well versed in that kind of mechanics. Like a second Triptolemus, he introduced many improvements in agriculture into his own neighbourhood, being a great experimentalist. His estate being on the sea coast, he was the first that began to manure his land with mussels; for, being a stiff clay, it was fertilized as well by the shells, as by the fish. In those days, when the science of agriculture was so little understood, he contrived an apparatus for chopping whins (furze;) which he used to give intermixed with straw, as fodder, to his cattle in winter. In his excursions to Liverpool, or other distant places, whither his business sometimes called him, his attentive eye lost nothing that could benefit the district in which he lived. Instead of clog-wheels, which till then were in general use in Furness, he introduced the spoke-wheels; which being lighter in their construction, and in every respect better fitted for use, were soon afterwards universally adopted. He made, also, some important improvements in the structure of the plough, and it was to his ingenuity that agriculturists are indebted for the *iron* mould-board, which was cast according to his model, and first introduced into practice by himself; and which, from its form, was so well adapted to the purpose of turning the furrow-slice, that, I

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believe, it has remained unaltered to the present time.—He even carried his experiments so far as to attempt to construct a plough to go by wind. The first mahogany brought from the West Indies into Furness, if not into Lancashire, came in the form of a sailor's chest; and out of this he made a chest of Drawers, which was the first mahogany furniture introduced into that country. Prior to that, walnut or cherry-tree were in general use. His genius was as expert in making a fiddle, as in constructing, or embellishing a gentleman's mansion. Every structure in wood, however great, or however small, was within the compass of his abilities. From the extent of his business, notwithstanding his numerous family, (for he had ten sons and one daughter,) he might easily have grown rich, had he not had his infirmities; for genius and infirmity too frequently go hand in hand. He wanted exertion to collect his debts, and even to record them; no man ever felt less anxious about wealth, if he was but employed, he cared not who had the profit. His guileless simplicity, and confidence in other people's honesty frequently, also, exposed him to losses. Had he, however, been wealthy, he would probably have wasted his riches in expensive projects; as his genius led him strongly to that kind of speculation. Notwithstanding, however, this negligence in the management of his affairs, he was enabled to give a decent education to his children; and, at his death, to bequeath to George, his oldest surviving son, a small estate in Furness, and to his other children, proportionate legacies. His wife's name was Ann Simpson, she was born at a place called Sladebank in Millom, Cumberland, which estate belonged to her father. She was a clever woman, and well qualified to assist her husband in the management of his pecuniary affairs; but the important duties of a mother claimed her undivided attention. Her mother's name was Bridget Park, she was born at *Millwood*, near Dalton, and was the grandaughter

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of that Thomas Park, who has distinguished himself by writing a narrative of the intestine broils and commotions that afflicted Furness in the civil war between the king and parliament; he being during that unhappy period high constable of Furness, (from 1642 to 1647;) and who from the nature of his office, might justly have said in the words of Æneas;

——————quæque ipse miserima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui——————

[See West's Antiquities of Furness.]

All his sons died before the meridian of life, except George and James; the latter was a Lieut. Colonel in the Honorable East India Company's service, and much respected both in his professional, and private character. He was a man of gentlemanly demeanour, had a taste for literature, could write complimentary verses to the ladies, and trifle agreeably on the violin. I have an account by him of the siege of Darwar, in the East Indies, at which he was present when a Lieutenant; and several manuscript comedies, written in so slovenly a hand, that I have not hitherto had leisure to decipher them.

There was another son, besides George, gifted with such fine talents, that he ought not to be passed over in silence; though the page which records his genius, must also expose his infirmities. Much has been said *de infortunio literatorum;* but that misfortune, which seems so often to be the fate of men of genius, may, perhaps, be accounted for from this principle, which is applicable to mechanism in general—the finer the organization, the more liable it is to injury. A high susceptibility of feeling, and a powerful imagination, are generally the concomitants, if not the constituents of genius; these, I apprehend, result from a superior organization of the nerves

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which communicate between the senses and the brain—the seat of mind or of the reasoning faculty: when, therefore, the nerves become affected by any exciting cause, the feelings and imagination immediately participate; and if the cause be powerful, the delicate structure of the nerves becomes overstrained and forced; hence reason becomes implicated in the disorder and loses its control—then follows error, afterwards, misfortune. Besides, where there is genius there is generally a certain elevation of soul, which makes the possessor despise those low and mean practices by which vulgar minds prosper. Peter (for so he was called after a brother of his grandfather) was endued by nature with all those qualities of mind which constitute genius; his disposition, also, was amiable and virtuous; and had he been so fortunate as to have been subject to the controlling influence of some benevolent mentor when he entered extremely young and ignorant of mankind into the world; he might have been a splendid ornament to his profession. Beside painting, he had a turn for poetry and music; but having embraced the first, he had little leisure for the cultivation of the other sister arts.—See the appendix.

GEORGE ROMNEY was a native of Lancashire, and born at *Beckside*, adjoining to the town of Dalton, in Furness, on the 15th of December, O. S. 1734; which place his father afterward sold, and purchased in the year 1742, (as appears by the Title deeds,) a small estate, called *Upper Cocken*, in the same parish, about a mile west of Furness Abbey. I am the more particular in mentioning this circumstance, because some have asserted that he was born at the latter place. Here, however, he undoubtedly did reside from his eleventh to his twenty first year. He had an older brother, named William, who was intended for the university, and was instructed in classics, along with Dr. Postlethwaite, the late master of Trinity

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College, Cambridge, also of the same age, and born in the same town. Though William made great progress in scholarship, and might have had the advantage of being sent to Trinity College under the same circumstances, and with the same recommendation as Mr. Postlethwaite; yet he, either from the report of fortunes acquired in the West Indies, or from its being the *rage* at that time for the youth in the neighbourhood to go thither; preferred being apprenticed to one of the wealthy merchants of Lancaster, and placed in his stores in the West India Islands—a situation attended with more expense to his father, than that, of being sent a sizar to Trinity College. But George not making much progress in school learning, and being, moreover, of a sedate and steady disposition, was taken from school in his eleventh year, to be employed at home, where his services were wanted.

During the ten years that he continued with his father, while his genius was struggling in obscurity, and labouring under every disadvantage; not much is known of its operations, or of the manner by which it began to unfold itself: but it is probable that it might have received the first impulse from having observed his ingenious father make drawings of ornaments and architecture. Of his skill and ingenuity in carving, the violin which he made for himself, and which is now in my possession, is a curious specimen and a sufficient proof.

In his leisure hours he devoted himself to higher objects. There was at that time living at Dalton, a very ingenious man, of the name of Williamson, a watch-maker by trade, who had great influence in directing his pursuits. This person, being a masterly performer on the violin, taught him to play upon that delightful

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instrument; and I have heard him say, that he once accompanied Williamson to Whitehaven, where he had the good fortune to hear Giardini perform; with which he was so much transported, that it was sometime a struggle in his mind, whether he should devote himself to painting or music. Gainsborough, also, was equally enraptured when he heard the same performer at Bath; but with this remarkable difference of feeling—that he wished for the instrument, and Mr. Romney, the art.—It was, however, one of the peculiarities of Gainsborough's eccentric mind, to become enamoured of almost every kind of instrument, on which he happened to hear any able musician perform. This strange propensity must have arisen from the ardour and impetuosity of his genius, which, overlooking all intermediate steps, bounded at once upon that which he thought would lead directly to excellence.

Williamson was a philosopher, and explained to his youthful pupil the phenomena of the *Camera Obscura;* and it would be no extravagant idea, to suppose that the latter might have received his first impressions of picturesque representation by contemplating objects thus exhibited; it is quite as plausible as the story of the Corinthian maid; for Mr. Romney being then a pupil of nature, knew no more of art than the daughter of Dibutades. Williamson was likewise an enthusiast in the science of alchymy, and devoted much of his time to that unprofitable pursuit; and Mr. Romney, by associating with him, did not escape the allurements of that delusive study; but his friend's bad success, co-operating with his own improving judgement, soon put to flight the airy dreams of wealth, which had beguiled his youthful imagination. The circumstances, however, which had attended some of Williamson's unsuccessful experiments, had made so deep an impression upon Mr. Romney's memory, that in his declining

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age he used sometimes to amuse himself with the idea of constructing a Melodrame upon them. It was his intention to have made a series of drawings, representing the progress of an alchymist in quest of the philosopher's stone. The sanguine expectations of the philosopher were to have been heightened in every scene, but as he approached the crisis of the discovery, and was about to reap the golden recompense of all his toils; an ill-timed and prying curiosity in his wife, ignorant of his sublime pursuits, made frustrate, by one single interdicted act, the consecutive experiments of years: a tremendous explosion then took place, the devil himself appeared;—but, instead of gold, there remained nothing but broken crucibles; and all those glittering visions, which had so long figured in his imagination, vanished at once in smoke,

——————come fumo leve
Al vento.——————

The catastrophe was suggested by a similar accident that befel Williamson in his chymical processes; who, it should seem, had a wife ill able to withstand the temptations of curiosity: whatever, however, were the infirmities of this woman, he certainly had not the character of being a good husband, though a clever fellow. When he came to live at Dalton he had left her, and co-habited with another woman, by whom he had afterwards four children, and whom he ultimately married on the death of his wife.

Mr. Cumberland, in his brief Memoir of Mr. Romney, has asserted, that he conceived his first idea of becoming a painter from copying the cuts in a magazine, borrowed from a workman of his father's; and has dwelt with unbecoming levity upon circumstances, not only false in themselves, but made ridiculous; more with a view to display his own wit, than to elicit the truth of facts. Mr. Romney's father

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certainly did take in the universal magazine, several numbers of which remained in the family many years after; but the cuts which they contained, consisting of portraits and armorial bearings, were not of a character to inspire him with a love for art; though he might, perhaps, have amused himself by copying some of the heads. He had, however, a much better instructor—Leonardo da Vinci's Treatise on Painting, illustrated by a great number of good engravings. From this scientific book he must, undoubtedly, have derived much valuable information respecting the first principles of his art. It is a curious circumstance, and, perhaps, not unworthy of notice, as it shews his strong propensity for drawing; that, whenever he inscribed his name in a book, he generally surrounded it with a beautiful drawing of ornaments, either by pen, or pencil. In Da Vinci's treatise his name is twice inscribed—in 1754 and 1755—and ornamented in this manner; which, also, proves, that this book was in his possession the year before he went to Steele, and probably sooner. His name is likewise written in Le Brun's Passions, dated 1755, and with similar decorations; so that this also, may be regarded as an elementary book in his possession before he left home. As Reynold's enthusiasm for art is said to have been strongly excited by the perusal of Richardson's Treatise on Painting; so the genius of Mr. Romney may be supposed to have received as powerful an impulse from the study of Da Vinci; especially as the volume also contains a life of the author, and a preface by the translator; both tending to inspire elevated sentiments respecting the art of painting.

There was another book, belonging to his father, called *Art's Masterpiece* (18mo,) which contained some useful instructions respecting the art of limning or painting in oil; from this, also, it is probable that he might have acquired some practical knowledge of the process and mechanism of colours.

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Nothing contributes more to fan the flame of genius than the consociation of congenial spirits; if a man of genius has no one to participate in his feelings, his enthusiasm will smoulder and die: no brand will burn alone, but if more be added, the process of ignition will advance. Mr. Romney might have remained,—like some gem buried in its native mine,—lost to the world; had not a lady, enthusiastically fond of art and endued with fine taste, come, and like some inspiring genius, roused the dormant energies of his mind. She was a Mrs. Gardner, the sister of Mr. Alderman Redman of Kendal, an Upholsterer, with whom Mr. Romney's father was connected in business. This intercourse in trade caused an intercourse of friendship, which was the motive that brought her as a visitant to his father's house. She soon perceived by the specimens which he had produced, that he had a brilliant genius, capable of acquiring great lustre in the profession of a painter; she, therefore, encouraged him by every means to cultivate it. He was in consequence prevailed upon to make a drawing of her, which met with the highest approbation, and was, I believe, his first essay in portraiture. To this lady the world is chiefly indebted for eliciting the hidden sparks of his genius; who might, therefore on that account, be regarded as the foster-mother of his art; while, at the same time, she was, also, the real mother of a child, who afterwards became distinguished as a fashionable crayon painter, viz.—Daniel Gardner—who in his turn, received instructions from Mr. Romney before he left Kendal.

At length, Mr Romney gave such decisive indications of talent, and manifested such a growing enthusiasm for the art of design, that it was deemed advisable, by all means to place him under some able master. Mr. Lewthwaite of Broadgate, in Millom, an intimate friend and relation, was particularly instrumental in prevailing on his father

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to take this step. There was at that time figuring away at Kendal, an itinerant painter of some celebrity, whose name was Steele; but who, having been at Paris, and having adopted the French manners and style of dress, and being withal of a showy appearance, had acquired the nickname of *Count* Steele. This person being thought the most proper for instructing Mr. Romney, his father accordingly took him to Kendal; where, having had an interview with the *Count*, the business was soon settled. The following Indenture, which has been luckily preserved, will show the conditions.

INDENTURE.

"ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT indented made concluded and agreed upon the twentieth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty five between John Romney of the parish of Dalton in Furness in the County Palatine of Lancaster Cabinet-maker and George Romney son of the said John Romney of the one part and Christopher Steele now of Kirkby-Kendal in the County of Westmorland Painter of the other part;—

"WITNESSETH that whereas the said George Romney hath with the consent of his said father testified by his being a party hereto and sealing and delivering of these presents placed and bound himself apprentice unto the said Christopher Steele to be taught and instructed in the art or science of a Painter which he the said Christopher Steele now useth and with him as an apprentice to dwell continue and serve from the day of the date hereof unto the full end and term of four years thence next ensuing and fully to be compleat and ended. Therefore he the said John Romney doth hereby for himself his heirs executors and administrators covenant promise and agree to and with the said Christopher Steele

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his executors and administrators and the said George Romney doth hereby voluntarily consent and agree that he the said George Romney during all the said term of four years his said master well faithfully and diligently shall and will serve and his lawful and reasonable commands willingly perform the secrets of his said master faithfully shall keep hurt to his said master he shall not do nor willingly suffer to be done by others and shall be of good and orderly behaviour at all times towards him the said Christopher Steele and that he the said John Romney his executors or administrators shall and will during all the said term at his and their own expence find and provide for the said George Romney suitable and necessary cloaths both linnen and woollen.

"And the said Christopher Steele for and in consideration of the sum of twenty one pounds in hand paid or secured to be paid to the said Christopher Steele by the said John Romney he the said Christopher Steele doth hereby covenant promise and agree to and with the said John Romney his executors and administrators that he the said Christopher Steele shall and will during all the said term of four years according to the best of his skill and knowledge teach and instruct or cause to be well and sufficiently taught and instructed the said George Romney in the same art or science of a Painter and shall and will also find and allow unto the said apprentice meat drink washing and lodging suitable and convenient for such an apprentice during the term aforesaid. In witness whereof the parties have hereunto interchangeably set their hand and seals the day and year first above written."

"Sealed and delivered (being duly stamped) in the presence of us }
"THOS. ASHBURNER."
"JAS. DOWKER."

"JOHN ROMNEY."
"GEORGE ROMNEY."
"CHRISTR. STEELE."

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Mr. Romney may now be considered as loosened from the shackles of his untoward fate, and emerging from obscurity; yet still he had many difficulties to encounter, and many obstacles to surmount. Steele, at the beginning, was far from being a good master, he treated him more like a servant than a pupil, and hurt his feelings by imposing upon him menial offices: besides, he did not allow him sufficient opportunities and facilities of study, but employed him chiefly in grinding colours, and in the drudgery of the art. It is but justice, however, to say, that he behaved much better afterwards; more, perhaps, with a view to indulge his own idle habits, than to promote the improvement of his pupil: however this may have been, Mr. Romney certainly did acquire considerable knowledge in the preparation and mixing of colours, either directly by his own observation and practice, or by his master's instruction; for there is, even in his earliest productions, a singular clearness and sweetness of tone in the colouring, far beyond what might have been expected from so young an artist. Steele was not so vile a dauber as he has been represented by Mr. Cumberland; he could paint a tolerable portrait for those days, and had, while at Paris, received some instructions from Carlo Vanloo, a painter at that time of considerable repute.

Men of brilliant imaginations and great sensibility, are the most susceptible of the impressions of love. Poets and Painters have ever been distinguished for their propensity to this powerful passion, which is in fact an affection of the imagination. Mr. Romney's mind was constituted of such elements as naturally conduce to its production; he had a nice perception of what is beautiful in the forms of nature; an imagination that exaggerated its realities; and a quick susceptibility of impression from such objects as delighted his fancy—the consequence was, that he became enamoured of a young female, into

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whose society he had happened to be introduced soon after he came to Kendal. The object of his affection was placed in the same rank of life with himself, and respectably connected in the town of Kendal. She excelled more in symmetry of form, than in regularity of features; yet in this latter particular she was far from deficient. She had had the misfortune to lose her father when she was a child, who died after a lingering and expensive illness, leaving a widow with two infant daughters in impoverished circumstances. Her mother, however, was an amiable and prudent woman, and discharged her maternal duties to the best of her ability, instilling into the minds of her children the principles of morality and religion, and illustrating her precepts by her own correct example.—Such were the circumstances relating to Mary Abbot; who had the fortune, or misfortune, to gain the affections of George Romney.

In the mean time, Steele having suddenly determined to quit Kendal, and go to reside at York, his pupil was accordingly instructed to make immediate preparation to accompany him. This intimation came like a thunderbolt, sudden and overwhelming. The prospect of a separation of long and uncertain duration cast a gloom over the anxious lovers, which nothing seemed likely to dispel but the security of wedlock—they were, therefore, married a few days before Mr. Romney set off for York. This precipitate and apparently improvident step, drew down upon him the reproof of his parents: in reply, he endeavoured to justify his conduct, and I think with arguments of considerable weight; these are his very words—"if you consider every thing deliberately, you will find it to be the best affair that ever happened to me; because, if I have fortune, I shall make a better painter than I should otherwise have done; as it will be a spur to my application: and my thoughts being now still, and not

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obstructed by youthful follies, I can practise with more diligence and success than ever." I have no doubt myself but it was highly advantageous to his professional pursuits, and contributed essentially to his future excellence. His affections and feelings being thus gratified and his mind at ease, he devoted himself to his art with the most determined industry. From the time of his marriage till he finally quitted Kendal, his application was incessant; and having no models to study from but those of nature, he acquired a style peculiar to himself, which, though much refined and improved by future study and practice, he never afterwards entirely changed.

While at York, he was frequently supplied with money by his wife, who used to send it, half a guinea at a time, concealed under the seal of a letter; and he sent her his own portrait, the first he ever drew in oil.—I remember it well, it was hard and laboured, and had all the appearance of a first essay.

After staying nearly a year at York, Steele returned a few weeks before his pupil, leaving him to finish those portraits which he himself was too indolent to complete: thus Mr. Romney was enabled to receive payment for them, and to discharge his master's debts. This was, I believe, the only time he ever quitted a town without leaving some demand unsatisfied: indeed, such were his thoughtless and extravagant habits, that he involved himself in debt wherever he went; and was frequently under the necessity of skulking, in order to shun the unwelcome gripe of the unrelenting bailiff: his *gaiete de cœur* and *nonchalance* were, however, superior to every consideration of this kind, and never forsook him, even under the most trying circumstances.

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The painter and his pupil next proceeded to Lancaster, where they sojourned a short time; but not meeting with sufficient employment, Steele determined to sail for Ireland: Mr. Romney, however, had had already so much experience of his master's irregular habits and eccentric conduct, that he felt great reluctance to accompany him; besides, being now a married man, he anxiously wished to be freed from his indenture, that he might practise on his own account. It happened that Steele in his embarrassments had borrowed money of his pupil, at different times, to the amount of ten pounds; which being unable to repay, it was suggested to Mr. Romney by one of his friends, to make the following proposal:—that he would cancel the debt, provided his master would give him his indenture.—The terms were accepted, and the young painter became his own master, to his inexpressible delight.

Now all impediments to his application being removed, and he himself at liberty to act according to his own discretion, he immediately commenced the public profession of a portrait-painter, notwithstanding that he had been little more than two years a student in the art. Though the theatre of his first essays was only a small provincial town, yet such was the state of society there at that time, and in the neighbourhood, that it comprised within its circle several gentlemen of good education and of liberal minds, who felt the influence of genius, and knew how to appreciate its merits—Mr. Romney was no sooner known than he was respected and courted. In a manufacturing town, it cannot be supposed that there were many who had acumen sufficient to distinguish, and taste enough to admire, the growing talents of a young artist; it is only wonderful that there were any. That there were others, also, of a different description, will appear from the following circumstance. Soon after he came to

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Steele, he was requested by him to carve a frame for a particular portrait which he was then painting. While Mr. Romney was privately engaged in this employment, he was accidentally seen by two of the principal inhabitants, who expressed their astonishment that so ingenious a carver should turn painter.

The first production of his pencil was the representation of a *hand holding a letter*, which he painted for the post-master at Kendal; and which continued long to distinguish the window of the post-office in that town. And the two first portraits he painted, were two half-lengths of Mr. Walter Strickland, of Sizergh, and his lady. From this gentleman he received much kind attention, who invited him frequently to Sizergh, and afforded him every facility to copy some excellent portraits there. One was that of Sir William Strickland, by Lely; the other two were, I believe, by the French painter Rigaud; one the portrait of a Bishop of Namur, the other of a French admiral; both ancestors of the Strickland family. He must, undoubtedly, have derived considerable improvement from copying these works; for, in fact, they were the only pictures by other masters, that he had had any opportunity of studying, almost of seeing, before he went to London. Mr. Strickland seems to have formed a just opinion of his talents, and to have anticipated his future excellence. This gentleman, dying soon after, was succeeded by his brother Charles, who also had his portrait painted by Mr. Romney. This latter was a full-length figure, about two feet high, upon a kit-cat canvass. He is represented sitting with a fishing-rod in his hand, and a waterfall in the Kent, near Sizergh, called *the Force*, is introduced in the background. He painted several other full-length portraits of the same size; two of which I must not omit to mention on account of the dogs with which they are accompanied. One is the portrait of Mr.

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Jacob Morland, of Capplethwaite, in his shooting dress; with his favourite pointer. No representation can approach nearer to the truth of nature than the portrait of this dog; the sleekness of the skin, and the characteristic sagacity of the animal are so well depicted as to give it the appearance of reality. The other is the portrait of Colonel George Wilson, of Abbot Hall, Kendal. This gentleman is represented leaning against a rock, attended by three beautiful spaniels. The dogs are painted in a style that would do credit to the pencil of Snyders. The picture is now at Dallam Tower. It is a tribute due to the liberal and enlightened mind of the Colonel, to mention, that he took a lively interest in the success of the young painter, his townsman. Indeed, there was a general feeling in his favour: and every individual of any consequence in the town and neighbourhood, felt a personal participation in the anticipated celebrity of a youth, who had sprung up, as it were, from the bosom of their society. Besides this picture, there are two others at Dallam Tower, which may be noticed here; partly on account of their merit, and partly, as being specimens of his skill at different periods of his life. One is a large half-length of the Reverend Daniel Wilson, late of Lancaster, in his clerical dress; which was painted in 1767, during Mr. Romney's second visit to the north. The other is a three-quarters portrait of Mrs. Wilson, a very pleasing picture, and sweetly coloured: it was painted about 1784, when he had acquired his best manner.—At Sizergh, besides the pictures already mentioned, there is another kit-cat, of the Reverend William Strickland sitting in his study, and intended as a companion to that of his brother Charles; and a half-length of Mrs. Strickland, the wife of the last named gentleman: both these were painted a short time before he went to London.

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Soon after Mr. Romney came to Kendal he happened to see a lady in church, whose beauty was so attractive as to excite in him a strong curiosity to know who she was. He accordingly took the first opportunity to describe her person to an acquaintance, who had a general knowledge of the inhabitants; but without success: he then took his pencil and drew her head, by which means he obtained the wished-for information; as the truth and accuracy of the sketch immediately brought her to the recollection of his friend. I mention this as a proof of the correctness of his memory, as far as regards objects of form; for it does not appear that it was in other respects remarkably tenacious. The way in which I should attempt to account for this peculiarity in him, and in all those who excel in the art of delineating objects; is, by attributing to them a finer structure of the organs of vision, by which a more refined perception of pleasurable sensation is communicated to the sensorium from the contemplation of picturesque forms; and, consequently, a deeper and more lasting impression is left upon the mind. The same may be said of the musician; whose capability of receiving high gratification from the harmonious combination of sounds, whose quick perception of dissonance, and whose strong retention in memory, of such combinations as are in accordance with the true principles of harmony; may, in like manner, be owing to the exquisite formation of the organs connected with the sense of hearing. It is this refined organization, operating through the medium of the nerves and sensorium upon the imagination, which produces that pre-eminence of faculty called *genius*,—that dear, but dangerous gift,—which may either be a bane, or a blessing; conferred by the Author of nature before the infant has imbibed from its mother's breast the sustenance of life.

Est jubar infusum menti cum flamine vitæ;

as Du Fresnoy has justly said.

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The wife of the Rev. Dr. Simonds, vicar of Kendal, was very desirous of having a portrait of her husband, but he could not be prevailed upon to sit; the only expedient, therefore, that could be devised in order to gratify the lady's wish, was, to catch his likeness while he was performing the duty in church. By these means Mr. Romney was enabled to produce a portrait perfectly satisfactory to the parties concerned. He also painted the portraits of several other clergymen, and, among the rest, that of the Rev. Dr. Bateman, the celebrated master of Sedbergh school. The charge for this picture (two guineas) remained unpaid when Mr. Romney returned to Kendal in 1765; and when he applied for it, he received the following singular epistle, which excited no little merriment at the learned Doctor's expense.

"Sir,

"I must take the liberty of expostulating a little with you about your mean and tergiversating behaviour, with regard to your promise of drawing my picture over again at your return from London, with an addition to the price. Did you agree to that, or did you not? You know you did. And yet you now fly from your word, as you are going, as you think, out of my reach, for you shall certainly have a Writ upon you for non-performance of contract; for your brother confessed to me that you agreed to what you had so solemnly promised to myself. But I shall not only do this, but I shall represent you in your proper colours (to borrow a term of your art) both here and to your friends at London, unless you perform your agreement. You will also see yourself and your behaviour painted in one of the public papers; as I am persuaded it is one of the most flagrant and scandalous breaches of faith I ever met with, and therefore merits a public exposition, and deserves to be exhibited as an object of public detestation. I know where

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you live in London, and who are your friends, and therefore can easily reach you, and make you feel a little of my resentment, unless this move you to make some reparation, or some atonement, for your breach of faith to your injured friend.

"W. BATEMAN."

"P. S.—If you had come over to make only this picture tolerable, you would by my recommendation have got two or three more.—Cave litem, perfide pictor."

Sedbergh, Nov. 26th, 1765.

"I but lately heard you were come into the country; and thought to have wrote, but did not certainly know where to meet with you, and I concluded that you would infallibly come over."

In consequence of this Mr. Romney sent an attorney's note, which immediately brought the Doctor to reason.

While Mr. Romney was at York, he had an opportunity of purchasing some prints, which must have been of great use to him in forming his taste for picturesque composition: for no sooner was he at liberty to direct his own studies, than he began to make copies from them in oil colours, and to form compositions of his own invention. These, like those vernal flowers, which bloom in uncultivated wastes, in spite of inclement skies and bitter chilling winds, captivated by a certain natural simplicity, and excited interest, as being the precursors of more refined productions. They were the blossoms of those bright and sunny hours, when the mind, disengaged from portraiture, and brooding over its own imaginings, brought into visible existence the creations of fancy. They were his *subsecivæ operæ* during the

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four years he was resident at Kendal. Their accumulation, however, made it expedient that some scheme should be adopted for their disposal; and, if possible, with some advantage to himself. A lottery seemed the most likely means to effect this purpose, if it could be made sufficiently attractive by the smallness of the subscription: the following printed Notice was, therefore, offered to the public a short time before he left the country.

A LIST OF PAINTINGS,

By George Romney,

TO BE DISPOSED OF IN THE MANNER OF THE STATE LOTTERY:

TO CONSIST OF

Eighty two Tickets at ten shillings and sixpence each.

The Drawing is to begin immediately after the subscription is filled, notice of which will be given, and the Paintings exhibited a week before the time in the Town-Hall, from one to four o'clock in the afternoon.

N. B. The Pieces with this mark* before them are originals, the others from designs of eminent masters.

	F.	I.		F.	I.	£.	s.
*1. King Lear awakened by his daughter Cordelia....	4	4	by	3	6	8	8
*2. King Lear in the tempest tearing off his robes....	4	4	by	3	6	8	8
*3. A Landscape with figures.....	4	2	by	2	8	4	0
*4. A Quarrel	2	11	by	2	3	3	10
*5. A Shandean piece.....	2	6	by	2	2	3	0
*6. A Droll Scene in an ale-house.....	2	2	by	2	1	2	10
7. A Landscape in the taste of Poussin.....	2	11	by	2	3	2	10

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	F.	I.	F.	I.	£.	s.
8. Harvest, a landscape	2	6 by	2	0	1	5
9. St. Cecilia	2	1 by	1	9	1	5
10. Holy Family	2	2 by	1	9	1	5
*11. A Group of Heads by candle-light	2	0 by	1	4	1	5
12. A Piece of Rocks	2	6 by	1	9	1	0
13. A Magdalene	2	0 by	1	7	1	0
14. Colebrook-dale, a landscape	2	0 by	1	5	0	15
15. A Landscape from Woverman	2	0 by	1	6	0	15
16. A Landscape with figures fishing	1	4 by	1	1	0	10
17. A Dutch House with figures	1	4 by	0	11	0	10
*18. A Tooth Drawing by candle-light	1	0 by	0	10	0	10
19. A Landscape from Bergham	1	6 by	1	2	0	10
20. A Landscape with a group of houses	1	4 by	0	10	0	5

The pictures were accordingly exhibited in the Town-Hall of Kendal with free admission; and the Drawing was performed in the following manner.—Two small boxes of a cubical form, and about ten inches square, having each an orifice on the top sufficient to admit a hand, were placed on a table; in one were deposited the names of the subscribers, and in the other, the blanks and prizes. That no collusion or unfairness might be imputed, a boy was selected from the company to draw the tickets; which he did singly from each box respectively; and they being immediately opened in public, the success of each name was declared in the order of drawing.

Four of the fancy pictures belonging to this lottery, are still, I believe, in existence; but with respect to the rest, I cannot give any satisfactory information. *King Lear awakened by his daughter Cordelia* was in the possession of the late Adam Walker, the distin-

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guished lecturer in philosophy. It was found by one of his sons in a broker's shop at Kensington, who, without knowing that it was a performance of one of his father's friends, took a fancy for it, and purchased it. His father, however, soon recognized his old acquaintance; for to its execution he had himself contributed as a model. How it had strayed thither seems odd; but as it originally fell to the lot of a Mr. Richardson, of Cartmel, whose son afterwards removed into the south, it is probable that it might have been sold by him along with some furniture. Mrs. Romney was the model for Cordelia.

King Lear in the tempest tearing off his robes is now in the possession of Mr. Braddyll, of Conishead Priory, a gentleman well qualified to appreciate its merits. It became the prize of a Mrs. Robinson, the housekeeper of Captain Wilson, of Bardsea Hall. As this picture was undoubtedly his very first essay in historical painting, its defects should be weighed with all due allowance. It is a torch-light subject, and the effect of light and shadow is managed with a proper attention to nature; the expression, also, is characteristic and forcible. It is remarkable that his first and last attempts were representations from the same scene, with some difference, however, in point of time. In the latter unfinished work, he painted the head of Edgar from his pupil, Isaac Pocock, in 1798, when the powers of his genius were considerably impaired; still, he was able to make a strong likeness, and to impart to it a certain appropriate expression of feeling and character.—From both these we may infer, that Shakspeare was his favourite author from beginning to end. And thus, by uniting the extremes, as it were, in one point, he completed the circle of his professional life.

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A Landscape with figures.—The circumstances that led to the discovery of this picture are as follow: when Mr. Romney visited the north of England in 1798, he was desirous of purchasing some place of residence there; and Barfield, belonging to a Mr. Gibson, being at that time advertised for sale, I went with him to view it. In examining the house, a solitary picture hanging in the gallery caught my eye; and with little curiosity, but merely to say something, I asked Mr. Gibson by whom it was painted. He said, by Romney. This information surprised me, because I was not then aware that he had ever painted a landscape; but supposing that it might perhaps be the work of his brother Peter, I said, by what Romney? He replied, by the famous Romney. I cast a significant glance at Mr. Romney, but said nothing—

Con viso, che tacendo dicea, taci;

for we were not known. I then proceeded to examine it with more attention. It represents a party, consisting of three gentlemen and two ladies, going on board a boat on a lake. The ladies show great timidity, so natural to the female character under the impression of danger, which expression is frequently accompanied with a certain degree of grace;—but are politely urged by their attendant gallants. The figures reminded me of Wattean's familiar and elegant compositions. The colouring is beautifully clear and as fresh as if recently painted. The execution evinces great facility and freedom of handling; and the touches are spirited and neat, far, very far, beyond what might have been expected from so young and unexperienced an artist. The landscape, also, shews that he would have excelled in that branch of the art, had he made it his particular study. I have heard Mrs. Romney speak with much delight of a party of pleasure, which she and her husband made with some friends to Bowness, and the island on Windermere lake; and relate

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such occurrences as had made the strongest impression upon her memory. While she was thus alive to every little incident that had a tendency to promote, or disturb the social enjoyments of a gay and sprightly party; we may easily suppose that Mr. Romney, with his cast of mind, though participating freely in the hilarity and good humour of his company, would frequently have his attention captivated by the romantic and magnificent scenery around him; and would return from the lake with a rich store of fine ideas floating on his imagination.—He must have been strongly impressed with the stately grandeur of those venerable oaks, which, with their outspreading branches and umbrageous foliage, gave a kind of *druidical* sanctity to the northern extremity of the island—he would have observed the golden lustre of the evening sun tinging with its slanting rays all prominent objects—he would have noticed the bright and fleecy clouds, forming a brilliant contrast with the dark shadows of the woods—and have perceived, as the day declined, the rocky and precipitous mountain, which forms the western boundary of that part of the lake, already become involved in its own shadow, and casting a deep and solemn gloom over the adjoining water—and the whole reflected upon the glassy surface of the lake, like an inverted picture. —With impressions like these on his mind, it is evident that he began this landscape; and it may, therefore, be fairly inferred that it owes its origin to this excursion. It is not, however, a faithful representation of the lake, but embodies such ideas as the contemplation of such scenery would naturally suggest. I may further mention, as a confirmation of what I have been saying, that two of the figures are evidently intended for himself and Mrs. Romney; and that the gentleman standing in the boat is the undoubted resemblance of Adam Walker, who was one of the party. For many years I kept this picture in view, and, at length, had an opportunity of purchasing it through

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the favour of Mr. Gibson; who had received it as a gift from his relation, the late Miss Gibson of Lancaster, to whose lot it originally fell.

The Shandean piece was in the possession of the late Sir Allan Chambre, Knight, to whom it was given by the person who gained it in the lottery. It represents doctor Slop, all splashed and bedaubed with dirt, ushered into the parlour by Obadiah, where Walter Shandy and Toby were discoursing on the nature of woman; but whose attention was immediately arrested by the woful and grotesque appearance of the doctor. This picture had considerable merit as a faithful representation of the narrative. From the same author he also painted *The Death of Le Fevre,* which he took with him when he went to London. This affecting picture has been thus described by Adam Walker. "The figures were about eighteen inches long and wonderfully expressive. The dying lieutenant was looking at uncle Toby who sat mute at the foot of the bed, and by the motion of his hand was recommending his son to his care. The boy was kneeling by the bedside, and with eyes that expressed the anguish of his heart, was, as it were, turning from a dying to a living father, begging protection,—a most pathetic figure. Trim was standing at a distance in his usual attitude, and with a face full of grief." Mr. Daniel Braithwaite, late of the general post-office, another of Mr. Romney's early and intelligent friends, used, also, when speaking of this picture, to express himself in terms that left no doubt of its great merit. What became of it, and of some others which he took with him from Kendal, does not appear. They were not finished at the time of the lottery, and some of them, perhaps, never.

At York he is said to have attracted the notice of Lawrence Sterne, and to have received from him some marks of attention and friendship:

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this is very probable; for a man of Sterne's genius, who was fond of painting and fiddling, would naturally be disposed to admire the promising talents of a youth whose pursuits corresponded with his own. I should think that it was some feeling of gratitude for courtesies thus received, that induced Mr. Romney to possess himself of Tristram Shandy so soon after its publication. And as the work itself was completely in unison with the character of his own feelings, it is no wonder that he made it a school for study.

I regret that I have no clue to trace the other fancy-pictures which graced this little exhibition, and fear they have long since perished. If, however, obscurity, and not extinction, be their lot; time, or happy chance, may yet restore them to light; for they certainly would be curious specimens of uninstructed genius. That which represented vulgar nature under the impulse of strong passions, would, I am sure, have been a masterpiece of natural painting. With respect to the candle-light subjects, I can myself bear indirect testimony to their excellence; because there is in the family a portrait of his brother James, then a boy of sixteen, which was painted at this very time, and probably experimentally: he is holding a candle in one hand, and intercepting its lustre by the other, as if to screen it from the action of the air. The form of the hand is distinctly seen by the transmission of light through the thinner parts; but the chief effect is produced by the illumination of the face. Neither Schalcken, nor Wright, could have surpassed this head: it is done in so clever a manner as to leave no doubt of his ability in this department of painting.

I have also a slight copy in oil of the *Tooth drawing*, painted by his brother Peter when only a boy; but sufficient to convince me of the excellence of the original. The disposition of the figures

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accords with the rules of correct composition, and the effect of light is admirable. The patient is placed in the middle of the picture, and a man is bending over him from behind, and pressing his head firmly on both sides with his flat hands; on the right, is the operator, who, with a lengthened and solemn visage, somewhat contorted, is in the act of extracting the offending tooth; on the left, is a woman in shadow, who, from the powerful effect of light upon the other figures, is evidently holding a candle, though invisible to the spectator: all the individuals seem to sympathize deeply in the sufferings of the patient; who appears in the very crisis of the operation, and in whom the combined expression of fear and pain is finely represented.

If I wanted to prove the power and versatility of Mr. Romney's genius, I should think it sufficient to refer to the list of his paintings, exhibited at Kendal; for in it will be found every kind of subject that can affect, or amuse the spectator—the sublime—the pathetic—the familiar—the comique—the ridiculous—the vulgar—candle-light subjects—and landscape: all performed before he had been seven years in his profession, including his apprenticeship; and before he had studied any paintings by other masters, except those portraits at Sizergh already mentioned. Even his *copies* were not without some claim to originality, having been painted from simple prints.

Several years ago I saw in the possession of a Mr. Matthew Whittaker, of Kendal, two small heads of Lear and Cordelia, studies for the picture of *Lear awakened by Cordelia.* They were coloured in so clear and beautiful a tone, especially the latter, that it became a matter of astonishment to me how he could have attained to such excellence in so short a time: it seemed to be the result of genius

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and feeling, almost without the aid of practice. Perfection, however, in colouring cannot be acquired without much study, even by the most favoured genius; but where that peculiar feeling is wanting, neither constant practice, nor the advantage of studying after the best colourists, can impart excellence. To constitute a great painter two distinct qualifications are necessary—excellence in design, and in colouring—which are rarely united in one individual*. Nature is parsimonious of her favours; if she be liberal of one talent, she is generally sparing of another. Mr. Romney, however, was one of those favoured few, upon whom she was pleased to bestow both these endowments. Those two heads (of Lear and Cordelia) were devoted to the flames, but were saved at the earnest request of Mr. Whittaker, to whom they were then given. This gentleman had kept them framed and glazed, a precaution unnecessary in oil paintings; but a sufficient proof of the estimation in which he had held them; they had, however, by that means retained their original freshness. He told me that a gentleman had expressed a strong desire to purchase them, and had offered him ten guineas, which he declined.

Although Mr. Romney had given a decided preference to the muse of painting, he had not yet withdrawn himself from the attractions of the gayer Euterpe; for he frequently received at his house a small party of musical amateurs, among whom were the above mentioned

* When the author wrote this passage, he was not aware that Vasari had made similar observations.

E quest arte tanto difficile, e ha tanti capi, che un artefice bene spesso non li puo tutti fare perfettamente, perche molti sono, che hanno disegnato divinamente, e nel colorire hanno avuto qualche imperfezzione; altri hanno colorito maravigliosamente, e non hanno disegnato alla meta. Questo nasce tutto dal giudizio, e da una pratica, che si piglia da giovane, chi nel disegno, e chi sopra i colori.—Vita di Correggio.

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Mr. Whittaker, who performed on the german flute, and Adam Walker. Even in the hours of solitary study, while he was engaged in transferring to the canvass the creations of his imagination, his fiddle was always at hand: and as it was often necessary in the progress of his work, to step back in order to judge of the effect; he would sometimes, on those occasions, amuse himself by carelessly flourishing with some favourite air, till a new idea, or alteration, came across his mind; when the violin was instantly dismissed and the pencil resumed—thus the two arts conspired, and the harmony of the picture was improved by the harmony of the music.

His prices till he went to London were two guineas for a three-quarter's portrait, and six for a whole figure on a kit-cat canvass. Considering the merit of his portraits, this was certainly a very inadequate remuneration; but as improvement was more an object with him than mere gain, it was deemed better to make some sacrifice of the latter, than run the risque of being without employment; especially as the sort of people he had generally to deal with, was more attentive to the enlargement of the purse, than to the refinements of painting. The only way, therefore, to convert labour into profit, was by painting quick; from this necessity he acquired a rapidity of manner, rarely equalled, never surpassed. He was, moreover, so modest and unassuming in the exercise of his profession, that he always underrated his own abilities; and never, at any time, set such prices upon his works as he was justly entitled to from their superior merit.

A short time before he left the north, he painted a portrait of an old gentleman for a Mr. B——— near Lancaster, who, either repenting of the expense, (two guineas,) or displeased by fancying

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himself not sufficiently consulted in the execution of it, declined the payment, on the plea that he was not present at the finishing; and the picture was left in the charge of a Mr. Collinson, of Lancaster. A short time after Mr. Romney had obtained the premium for his picture of the Death of General Wolfe, and when his professional character began to be better known, Mr. B——— called on Mr. Collinson, paid for the picture, and took it away. When the latter gentleman came to Kendal, he brought the money to Mrs. Romney, and jocosely observed;—that Mr. Romney's pictures improved by keeping;—which has proved to be literally the fact, for his colours have always stood, and grown riper and more mellow by time.

I have now brought the narrative of Mr. Romney's life to that important period, when it was deemed expedient that he should try to establish himself in the metropolis, as being the only proper theatre for the display of talent, and the acquisition of fortune. Here, however, a difficulty of a very serious character presented itself. It was impossible for him, who had neither friends nor patrons, to maintain a family in London, it was even doubtful whether he should be able to support himself. What was to be done? Must he abandon those noble prospects in his profession, which he had contemplated with so much enthusiasm? Or leave his wife and family behind, and adventure alone; and, if successful, send for them afterwards? Of this alternative, the latter plan seemed the least objectionable, if Mrs. Romney could be prevailed upon to accede to it. She, from a sense of duty, and a wish to promote the views of her husband, was, accordingly, induced to make this sacrifice of her feelings; trusting, however, that the separation would not be of long continuance, and that ultimate benefit would result from it. One hundred pounds, the produce of his industry and of her economy, was then divided equally

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between them; but he found it necessary afterwards to send for twenty pounds more. I have not a shadow of doubt of the sincerity of his intentions, and he expressly declared to her at parting, that the great object he had in view, was, to be enabled to support her and his family with respectability in London. When people are sanguine, they never calculate difficulties; otherwise, they might have foreseen that much time, under any ordinary circumstances, must elapse before he could be able to realize his intentions. As Mrs. Romney was a woman of an energetic and courageous mind, I often wondered, and once took the liberty to ask her, why she suffered herself to be separated from her husband? She said, she did every thing for the best. Her family consisted of a son and a daughter; but the latter died about a year after Mr. Romney's departure, at the age of three years. She was a most promising and interesting child, and her death plunged her disconsolate mother into the deepest sorrow; who then retired from Kendal, and went to live with her father-in-law till his death, performing those tender offices of filial affection, which were so congenial with her nature. Mr. Hayley, however, with a feeling that ill accords with friendship, has insinuated that Mr. Romney, in thus withdrawing from his family, was acting upon a plan of preconceived and deliberate abandonment. This is so manifest a calumny that it is almost unnecessary to confute it. It is in opposition to the most powerful instincts of our nature. It is quite improbable that a father, who was so capable of enjoying, as well as of delineating the playfulness and vivacity of children in general, could have been so insensible to the same qualities in his own, who were not, as I have understood, deficient in the graces and charms of infancy, as deliberately to cast them off, and to abandon them for ever. As a proof that he entertained no such intention, he came twice afterwards to see his wife.—The best way to ascertain the true

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character of a man's actions, is, to weigh his motives. As Mr. Romney had resolution to forego the endearments of domestic life for the noble purpose of providing for the future welfare of his family; his motives were certainly good, and would justify his separation in the first instance.

It is extremely repugnant to my feelings, as any one may easily conceive, to enter into these unpleasant, and as far as concerns the public, uninteresting particulars; but Mr. Hayley, with very imperfect knowledge of what he has presumed to relate, having invaded the sanctuary of domestic life, and with unholy hand rent that sacred veil which screens every private family; confounding fiction with reality, and exaggerating or misrepresenting circumstances, which might have been omitted altogether as not being essentially connected with Mr. Romney's professional life; it became a duty incumbent upon me, however painful, to correct his errors, and refute his misrepresentations. If Mr. Hayley had had any gratitude in his heart, or delicacy in his nature, he would have shewn more tenderness for the memory of his deceased friend, and more respect for the feelings of the surviving relatives of that friend; but how could delicacy, or feeling, be expected from a man, who has blazoned his own dishonour!

Why Mr. Romney never realized his professions to his wife, may be otherwise accounted for, than by attributing it to the ungenerous motives imputed by Mr. Hayley. From the very first, his brothers became a heavy burthen to him and drained him of his savings. He deemed it necessary, also, in order to promote his professional views, first to visit Paris, and at a subsequent period, Rome: which peregrinations consumed all the money he could raise on those respective occasions: thus a succession of untoward circumstances threw impediments in the

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way of good intent, till time and absence became impediments also. Besides, when Mr. Romney first went to London and began to associate with the young artists of the day, he, from a sort of reserve peculiar to himself, did not communicate the circumstance of his marriage; and by investing it, as it were, with a kind of secrecy, only increased his repugnance to divulge it; till, at length, by becoming an object of fear, the transition would be easy to that of dislike; —Quod timemus odimus.

Other circumstances, also, might perhaps have operated on his feelings, and contributed to estrange him from his wife: for, though his ruling passion was the love of art, and the desire of riches only subservient and secondary to that object, being such as every one feels who is anxiously struggling for independence; though in fact no man was ever more free from mercenary views: yet it is not improbable but he might have made some disadvantageous comparisons between his own lot and that of two contemporary painters,— Nathaniel Dance and John Astley; the former having married the Yorkshire Mrs. Drummer, with a fortune of eighteen thousand pounds per annum, and the latter, Lady Daniel, of Duckinfield, no less abounding in wealth: he, however, would soon have perceived that riches only generated folly and extravagance in them, and a disregard for that noble art, which was to himself the source of all his hopes and enjoyments.

Perhaps nothing contributed more to confirm him in habits of estrangement from his wife than the society of Mr. Hayley, who had the greatest influence over his affections and feelings. As, however, Mr. Romney's transgressions arose in the first place out of the necessity of his circumstances, and only stole into his habits and modes of

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life by the slow process of time; they ought not to be visited with that severity of censure which would attache to direct abandonment. It is much to be regretted that so unfortunate a circumstance should have cast a shade upon his character—illustrious by the splendour of his genius, and estimable for many private virtues.

On the fourteenth of March, 1762, he, in company with two other Kendal gentlemen, set off for London on horseback; one of whom (the late Mr. Holme, father of Dr. Holme, of Manchester,) had kindly promised me a written narrative of their journey, but was prevented by the sudden stroke of death. All that I remember of his oral account, after the lapse of many years, is—that they stayed a whole day at Manchester, where they met with Steele; who received his quondam pupil with great cordiality, and accompanied the party next day as far as Stockport; that many incidents occurred on the road, which to men disposed to see every thing in a favourable light, occasioned much merriment and good humour. Other circumstances, however, of a more serious cast sometimes happened, which kept their vivacity in check. One was with a highwayman, who joined them at a watering place, and stuck by them for a considerable time, sometimes going before, and sometimes lagging behind, as if to reconnoitre his prey; but disparity of numbers, and indications of resistance made him, at length, relinquish his intention. There was, however, on the part of the travellers a good deal of suppressed apprehension; for in those days, before the convenience of country banks, every man was his own purse-bearer; and Mr. Romney might with great truth have said on this occasion—*omnia mea mecum porto.* They arrived in London on the twenty first of March at the Castle Inn, where Mr. Romney was obliged to continue about a fortnight before he got settled in lodgings.

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, &c.

OF

GEORGE ROMNEY.

PART THE SECOND.

IN the transition—from a provincial to a metropolitan life, from a life of comparative privacy, to one of growing publicity—I have fixed the point, at which, I think, the second Part of Mr. Romney's professional life may properly begin. And here, before he quits that noisy receptacle of comers and goers, where he was compelled to pass his first anxious hours in London; often ruminating, no doubt, upon his future destiny, sometimes cheered by hope, and sometimes depressed by fear, according to the prevailing influence of his reflections;—I beg to call the attention of the courteous reader to the real circumstances of his situation. Behold a young painter, a perfect stranger in the great metropolis, and little conversant with the habits of the world; without friends, (a few country acquaintance only excepted,) and almost without money; encumbered, moreover, with two or three expensive brothers, who soon began to hang upon him;—boldly adventuring without any thing to sustain him, except the con-

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sciousness of his own powers, and that controlled by diffidence and modesty. He had no Lord Mount Edgecumbes to usher him into practice among the higher ranks, but was obliged to work his way, silently and slowly, till, at length, with almost Sisyphean toil, he gained the summit.

The following fragment of a letter, addressed to Mrs. Romney, which seems to have been his second after his arrival in London, has, by some strange chance, escaped the rapacity of time. It is written upon a folio sheet, but the lower fold having been worn off and lost, the part which follows the *hiatus* is written on the other side as a postscript. As this letter refers to some of his early works, its insertion here seems to be required as matter of testimony; and I think, if the sentence had been complete, some mention would, also, have been made of the picture of *The Death of Le Fevre.*

London, March 30th, 1762.

"My Dear,

"I cannot yet give you any particular account in what manner I shall live here, as I have hitherto only been an observer of the manners, customs, and circumstances of this place; in two or three days I hope to meet with lodgings to my liking.—I have met with a great deal of complaisance from the people I know, and believe I shall like the town very well.—I saw brother John for the first time yesterday week, and every day since; he is going to work immediately, and has promised to stick close to it for the future. I have not written to my father, brother Peter must therefore let him know.

"I desire, my dear, you will send the pieces of King Lear, and Elfrida rolled up in a box, by the first waggon, along with * * * * *

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"Mr. Pennington has been a little indisposed of late, but is so well recovered as to ride out every day. You will give my compliments to Mrs. Pennington and let her know.—Mr. Walker and all friends are very well.—Direct what you send to be left at the Castle Inn, till you hear further.—My compliments to all friends, particularly to Thomas Rowlandson.

"My Dear, as I was at Mr. Stephenson's*, and they did not mention any thing of paying for their son's picture, I imagine Mr. Drinkell has not informed them that he did not pay me; you will, therefore, desire Mr. Drinkell to acquaint them if he has not.—I shall be glad to hear what Peter is doing, and hope he will mind his business."

His first residence was in Dove Court, near the Mansion House; where, after so long an intermission, he recommenced his professional labours with redoubled application. The pictures which first graced his humble painting-room, were probably King Lear, Elfrida, the Death of Le Fevre, and a few portraits of friends. The Death of David Rizzio, painted upon a large scale, was the picture that chiefly engaged his attention while resident here. It has been represented by those who were competent to judge, as a work of extraordinary merit, combining energetic action with strong expression. Unluckily for him, it was buried in obscurity, and instead of producing profit, became an incumbrance. At length, when he went to Paris, it was sacrificed to convenience. Some heads that I have seen, in which

* The late Mr. Rowland Stephenson, the banker, whose wife, a Kendal lady and the daughter of Mr. Drinkell, an alderman of that Burgh, was particularly friendly to Mr. Romney; and I have no doubt some of his early pictures will still be in the possession of their son, the present Mr. Edward Stephenson; most likely the very picture here alluded to, and, perhaps, the portrait of Mrs. Stephenson herself.

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terror and affright were strongly depicted, and which had been preserved in the cutting up of some large picture, were, I have no doubt, the *reliquiæ* of this.

He next resided in Bearbinder's Lane, where we find him so early as the beginning of August. Here he continued some time and painted several portraits, chiefly through the zealous recommendation of his kind and amiable friend, Daniel Braithwaite, already mentioned;—portraits, which, from their merit, though painted for the humble price of three guineas a three quarters, might even then, had they been better known, have brought him into competition with the most distinguished painters of the day. It was here that he painted his picture of *The Death of General Wolfe.*

The following letter of the late Adam Walker, will not, I am sure, require any apology for its insertion here, as it contains a humourous and faithful description of the eccentricities of Steele, and also some other particulars not unworthy of notice.

Manchester, 12th Dec. 1762.

"Dear Romney,

"I mislaid your letter upon its first receipt, and consequently forgot the direction you gave me. I thought it, however, at one Panthevre's, in Bearbinder's Lane, and accordingly wrote you four months ago a sheet history of my own and the Count's transactions in Manchester; but the never hearing from you since, made me assured my direction was wrong, and that you had never received it.—A few days ago, I found yours, and my mistake, and so write again; but where shall I begin the eventful detail? The Count now rides the vast Atlantic ocean, and being quite tired out with the blindness

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and stupidity of the old, is going to try the discernment of the new world. He sailed from Liverpool a few days ago for the West Indies, having left Manchester in too abrupt a way to make an end of his affairs. Accordingly he put me into commission to collect his scattered goods and chattels; (an employ that I could very well have dispensed with;) and obliged his creditors, for the benefit of more things than their health, to take a ride out to Liverpool.

"I began my commission by buying three dozen of great and small corks for bottles of oil, &c., which had never known that convenience; but I had no sooner taken possession of the room, than it was filled with distressed damsels; some in want of a pair of stays, others of gauze handkerchiefs, ruffles, caps, dolls, &c., and many, no doubt, of their virtue. I obliged all as far as my things would go; but what were the lamentations when many were missing, and others so ornamented with oil, vermilion, &c., that the outrageous owners scarcely knew them again. But lo! the tremendous landlord of the vacant house comes in! "Nothing goes hence, sir, till I am indemnified for my lost keys, broken locks and windows, and those oiled places in my floors."—Dismay seized every damsel—"what not have my petticoat?" "not my gauze apron?" Oh Lord! "Nothing, young woman," replies the landlord.—But, sir, I hope there is enough besides, and I have a commission to pay you.—"Very well, then you may take yourselves and trumpery away," quoth he to the afflicted—they did, and compounded for the stains and rents in their different garments with great exultation of heart. But ere the prints are half gathered from the floor, in comes a tribe.—"Sir, my bill is only five shillings and sixpence; mine only fifteen shillings; all charged at the very lowest. Sir, I must have my picture, he had a ring for it; though its like the rest, but half done. Sir, I understand

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you have a commission so and so. Sir, you know Mr. Steele and you and I have been very merry together, and it would be hard if the two guineas I lent——" Zounds! gentlemen, I have but four pound ten to pay twenty with—what the devil would you have me do? I'll not pay a farthing of my own. "But, sir, you know a poor washer-woman gets her bread very hard." So do I.—I'll positively throw up my commission. With great difficulty I got all together, and a laced suit from the pawnbroker's; and sent all off, except a landscape after Poussin, two war pieces, a night piece, and a Dutch one, all of your performance, which I saved from the general wreck by giving him two guineas for them. My picture is in the same state in which you saw it. I do not think this thoughtless fellow has done a week's work these six months; sometimes the weather, sometimes a girl, and sometimes the prospect of matrimonial emolument, has kept him from all manner of business, which might have kept him out of debt, and from that multitude of mortifications, which continually attended him.

"My paper is almost gone, and not a word of myself—indeed my life is such a piece of clock-work, that no part of it would entertain a connoisseur in variety.

"It was with inexpressible pleasure that I heard of your success in London, and I am sure it will increase. You have now, I dare say, laid aside all schemes of pastoral felicity, a reverie that I often indulge. Hope is the greatest cordial in life; which, when I am in the greatest bustle, can cheer the fatigues of business by anticipating a pleasure which may never come. God bless you, write to me, and be particular. I know how much you hate writing, but mortify yourself for once, and add one more pleasure to the life of

"Your most affectionate friend,

"A. WALKER."

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The following year we find him lodged near the Mews Gate, Charing Cross, where most likely he continued to reside till he went to Paris. His motive for removing thither was probably to place himself near the artists' academy in Saint Martin's Lane, and the exhibition in Spring Gardens. This part of the town was also, at that time, distinguished by the concentration of living genius: Dance and Mortimer resided in Covent Garden; Hogarth and Reynolds in Leicester Fields.

This year (1763) he became a competitor for the premiums offered by the society for the encouragement of arts and sciences, and was so successful as to obtain the second prize for his picture of *The Death of General Wolfe.* Some demur, however, having afterwards arisen as to the justice of the decision, a second meeting of the committee was called, and the adjudication was revoked. The prize of fifty guineas was then assigned to Mortimer, for his picture of Edward the Confessor seizing the treasures of his mother; and another premium, created expressly for the purpose, was decreed to Mr. Romney, not as a compensation for any disappointment he might have suffered, but as a recompence due to the merit of his picture. This, I believe, is a true statement of facts; but how far he was aggrieved by the transaction is another question. Cumberland, who lived in London at the time and was well informed of the circumstances, gives the following account. "To the picture of The Death of General Wolfe the committee decreed the second premium, but not without some dissension, as it was apprehended to be the production of an old artist, for some years retired into the country; and who was accordingly censured for what was considered as an attempt to impose upon the Society. A short time, however, cleared up this mistake, and the committee being summoned to a second sitting, the judges, who had

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decreed the second prize to the painter of the death of Wolfe, found their adjudication in danger of being reversed by the objections which were started by the friends of the rival candidate; not to the merit of the picture, but to the propriety of its being considered as an historical composition, when, in fact, no historian had then recorded the event on which it was founded. Other criticisms even more ridiculously minute and frivolous than the above, were offered against it; as that the officers and soldiers were not all in their proper regimentals, that Wolfe himself had on a handsome pair of silk stockings, against the costume of a general on the field of battle; and some objected to the deadly paleness of his countenance. Upon these grounds the decree was reversed, and poor Romney, friendless and unknown, was set aside in favour of a rival better supported; a hardship so obvious, and a partiality so glaring, that the committee could not face the transaction, but voted him a premium extraordinary, nearly, if not quite, to the amount of the prize he had been deprived of."

Some, also, by way of reproach have called it a coat and waistcoat subject; an objection, which would exclude from the pencil all important events in modern warfare; and would apply with equal truth to West's celebrated picture on the same subject, subsequently painted and universally admired. But, in fact, all such feeble objections only prove the merit of Mr. Romney's picture; because the caviller would never have had recourse to them, could he have produced more weighty arguments. To show, however, in what light the picture was regarded by the public, we have the testimony of a contemporary writer. In a poem entitled, *On Beneficence, a poetical essay*, published in 1764, and written, I believe, by the learned biographer of Lord Mansfield, the late John Halliday, esquire,—is the following couplet and note. The latter probably written to remove any

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disgrace that might have attached to the society from the transaction.

"Ev'n thy bold canvass, Reynolds, Romney* thine
Starts into life, to fire discernment's eye."

* "A young portrait painter, who successfully attempted the nobly pathetic scene of The Death of General Wolfe. That dawning effort of his genius, then very little cultivated by art, every one remembers graced the exhibitions of the spring 1763; and it is not easy to determine whether more honour is reflected on the patrons of unassisted genius, the Society of Arts, or on the painter, by the premium or ray of bounty, on that occasion purposely made to adorn, cherish, and enliven rising merit."

I think the following circumstance may, also, be regarded as no inconsiderable test of the merit of Mr. Romney's picture;—that it was capable of exciting so strong a feeling of admiration in the public mind after it had been so recently gratified (1762) by the exhibition of Sir Joshua's admirable picture of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy; the latter painted by the most celebrated painter of the age, in the zenith of his career, the other by an obscure and friendless young artist, unknown and unpatronized. But who was the person through whose especial interference the decree was reversed? The illustrious Reynolds! And can he be regarded as an impartial judge? What say facts and circumstances? Many competent to form a correct opinion, thought differently from him, but paid deference to his judgment. He was too much versed in his profession, and had too shrewd an intellect not to perceive in the author of that picture a future rival. Let any one indeed look at the portraits painted by Mr. Romney at that time, and see whether there was not sufficient ground

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for jealousy on the part of Reynolds. Every man who aspires to emolument and fame, will naturally grow jealous of another who is likely to enter the lists against him; and of all men the *irritabile genus* PICTORUM is the most liable to this infirmity. The following principle, laid down by Sir Joshua himself, and grounded upon his own feelings, establishes the truth of my observations—"That it was impossible for two painters in the same department of the art to continue long in friendship with each other."—He might also, perhaps, have been influenced by another motive, originating from a better feeling—friendship for Mortimer—who had been long in London, was formerly a pupil of Hudson, Reynolds' master, and *no portrait painter;* and who afterwards gave proof of his gratitude by dedicating his etchings to Sir Joshua. It was not to be tolerated, that a young man from the country of whom nobody knew any thing, should carry away the prize from a student of such high pretensions; who had had the advantage of studying in the Duke of Richmond's gallery, and was then admitted into the private academy in Saint Martin's Lane. It may be mentioned, also, as an additional indication of jealous feeling on the part of Reynolds, that not the slightest intercourse, at any time, subsisted between him and Mr. Romney; this could not, at first, have arisen from any backwardness on the side of the latter, because the notice of so distinguished an individual would have been of great advantage to Mr. Romney; unless, as some say, he had felt himself aggrieved by the interference of Reynolds in depriving him of the merited premium. However this may have been, I think it is sufficiently evident that he had been unjustly deprived of the premium, and that chiefly through the interference and influence of Reynolds. I certainly never heard Mr. Romney express himself upon the subject, because it never became a topic of conversation between us; but I have since understood from different persons, at

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that time qualified to judge, that he was unfairly used upon that occasion. The picture of Wolfe was afterwards purchased by Mr. Romney's friend and countryman, the late Rowland Stephenson, the banker, and presented by him to Governor Varelst, who placed it in the council chamber at Calcutta.

Mr. Northcote, in his Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds, mentions an anecdote of Garrick*, which, I think, clearly proves that Cumberland, five or six years subsequent to this, had incurred the displeasure of Reynolds and his friends, for taking Mr. Romney by the hand. It is, also, evident, from the same anecdote, that Reynolds had been speaking disparagingly of Mr. Romney; for how could Garrick know that he did not *admire* him unless he had heard him say so? From which expression it is not uncandid to infer, that jealousy had already taken deep root in the mind of Sir Joshua. By whatever means, however, Mr. Romney had incurred the dislike of that great man, it certainly was not by speaking injuriously either of him, or of others; for if ever he felt himself called upon from circumstances, to express an opinion respecting any of his contemporaries, or their works, he did it always with the utmost candour and liberality: and, I firmly believe, that in all matters relating to his profession, he was guided by that noble precept—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them."—And he even carried his

* "One morning when Garrick paid a visit to Sir Joshua, in the course of conversation he was very freely giving his opinion upon an eminent author of that time; he particularly condemned his dramatic works, respecting which he expressed himself in these words: "Damn his dish-clout face; his plays would never do for the stage if I did not cook them up and make prologues and epilogues for him, so that they go down with the public." He also added, "he hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire the painter whom he considers as a second Corregio." Who is that?" replied Sir Joshua, "Why his Corregio," answered Garrick, "is Romney the painter!"—Northcote's Memoirs of Reynolds.

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scrupulousness so far in this respect, as sometimes to check me; not because my observations were either uncandid or unjust, but because he thought that they did not come with a good grace from one so nearly connected with himself.

The merit of the picture of General Wolfe, and the feeling of interest that had been excited in Mr. Romney's favour in consequence of his having been deprived of the adjudged premium, gave publicity to his name, and procured him considerable employment; so much, indeed, that he was not able to finish another historical subject, to contend for the prizes of the following year; but he acquired that, which was of more immediate importance to him—a little money—and was thereby enabled to visit Paris. For, as his business increased, he soon began to feel the disadvantage of not having studied abroad. To the frequent enquiries of sitters, if he had visited France, or Italy? he could only answer with the mortifying negative. In truth, to study the works of foreign artists in their own country, and the productions of ancient art in the galleries of Italy, was at that time deemed so essential to complete the education of a painter, that without such recommendation, however great his merits, he had little chance of profitable employment; and not without reason, for the English artists, in those days, were not blessed with the many advantages, and facilities for cultivating the arts of design, which are now within the reach of every youthful student. Mr. Romney felt himself so humbled by this acknowledged defect, which compelled him to paint for lower prices, and to assume a tone of pretension far below his deserts, that he was determined to take advantage of the first money he could spare, in order to qualify himself to answer his sitters more to his satisfaction. And although he was unable then to achieve the greater plan of visiting Italy, which he afterwards accom-

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plished; yet he had scraped up funds sufficient to enable him to make a short visit to the French metropolis. Mr. Greene, of Gray's Inn, his oldest and most confidential friend, accompanied him; and the pleasure of the excursion was still further increased by their mutual participation. They embarked for Dunkirk the beginning of September, 1764, and thence proceeded by Lisle to Paris. An extract from a letter addressed to his brother Peter, will give the reader some idea of Mr. Romney's feelings and sentiments after a week's residence in Paris; it will also shew how much he had devoted his time to the acquisition of professional knowledge by studying the works of other masters.

Paris, September 16th, 1764.

"Dear Peter,

"We arrived at Paris the 9th instant, after a very agreeable journey, in good health and spirits. I was very much struck with the strange appearance of things at the first sight.—The degeneracy of taste that runs through every thing, is farther gone here than in London. The ridiculous and fantastical are the only points they seem to aim at. The paintings I have yet seen, are not much better, I mean by the present masters; but those of the time of Louis the fourteenth are very great, and every church and palace is filled with them. The vast collections I see every day, make me feel no inclination either for designing or writing at present, &c."

He had the good fortune to be introduced to Vernet, the celebrated painter of sea-pieces and landscapes, who, being employed by Louis the fifteenth to paint the sea-ports of France, had at that time apartments in the Louvre. This artist received him with great cordiality and frankness, attended him to some exhibitions, and procured him free access to the Orleans gallery, where he spent much of his

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time. Among the French painters, the works of Le Sueur seemed to coincide the most with his own ideas. After having passed six weeks most agreeably in France, and, no doubt, with considerable improvement in the science of his profession, he returned with his friend to England.

Being now much connected with the gentlemen of the law, he was induced to take chambers in Gray's Inn, where he painted the portraits of several of that profession; and among the rest, that of Sir Joseph Yates*, one of the judges of the King's Bench. It was here, also, that he painted his picture of *The Death of King Edmund*, which in the following year (1765) obtained the second premium of fifty guineas from the society for the encouragement of arts, &c. What became of this picture I have never heard, but fear that it may have been destroyed for want of a purchaser.

About this time there were two exhibitions, one in Spring Gardens, by the Incorporated Society of artists, who had just obtained a royal charter; and the other in Maiden Lane. This latter was chiefly supported by the younger artists, who had hitherto exhibited in the Strand, in the rooms, and under the auspices of the society for the encouragement of arts &c.; but, being now deprived of that privilege in consequence of its interfering too much with the general concerns of the society, they had engaged a large room in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden. Here they exhibited for two seasons; but finding that this situation was in many respects unfavorable, they entered into an agreement with Mr. Christie, the auctioneer, for the use of his rooms in Pall Mall for one month in every spring. It was with

* This gentleman was born at Peel Hall in Lancashire, and it is a pleasing circumstance thus to find countrymen contributing mutually to each other's distinction.

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this association (called, I believe, the free society of artists) that Mr. Romney first began to exhibit; and he continued with it for five successive years.

In 1765 he contributed two pictures, *The Portrait of a Gentleman*, and *The Head of a Lady in the character of a Saint.* In the autumn of this year he visited his friends in the north, and painted many portraits, chiefly at Lancaster. In 1766 he exhibited *The Portrait of a Gentleman* and *A Conversation.* The latter picture is now in my possession, and contains the portraits of his two brothers, Peter and James; the former is sitting before his easel, and demonstrating a proposition in Euclid to his brother, who is standing by him, and resting his arm on the chair-back. This picture is well composed, and with good effect, and the colouring is clear and delicate; the figures are about two feet and a half high.

In 1767 he again visited the north, and painted so many portraits at Lancaster, which was at that time a very flourishing town with many wealthy inhabitants, that he was obliged to take several with him to finish in London. In the short interval of two years, between those visits, a considerable improvement had taken place in his style of painting; as may be seen by comparing the pictures painted at those respective times. On his return to London in autumn, he engaged apartments in Great Newport Street, where he continued to reside till he went to Italy.—A street long distinguished by the residence of Sir Joshua, and which that artist had left only a few years before.

In 1768 he exhibited a large *Family Piece,* containing the portraits of Mr. Leigh, (a proctor in Doctor's Commons,) his wife, and

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six children; a picture much admired by the public at the time. It was about this period that Mr. Romney first became acquainted with Mr. Cumberland, who, attracted by his talents, came to sit for his portrait. His price at that time was eight guineas for a three quarters portrait, but at the suggestion of Mr. Cumberland he raised it to ten. Thus his succession of prices was as follows—in 1762, three guineas; in 1765, five; in 1767, seven; in 1768, eight; and in 1769, ten; but I believe he raised it to twelve before he went to Italy. One day before Mr. Cumberland's portrait was quite finished, he brought Garrick to see it; and has in his own Memoirs related the circumstances which took place on that occasion. Both he and Garrick seem to have indulged themselves too freely in sarcasm, the former at the expense of truth, and the latter, of good manners. But how could candour be expected from Garrick, the close and intimate friend of Reynold's? The picture which provoked their wit, was that of Mr. Leigh and his family, just mentioned, which certainly did not merit their severity.

It was a regular custom with Mr. Romney to make sketches for his principal works; and as most of his sketch books have been preserved, every picture of importance that he has painted, and many that he intended, may be traced in them almost in chronological order. Upon some occasions, so many different modes of representing the same subject presented themselves to his fancy, that he made several studies either varied in part or in the whole, and executed in a slight, bold, and rapid manner, just sufficient to convey the ideas; and from these he afterwards, made his selection. In one of those books there are several sketches of the subject of this picture, to none of which the observations of Mr. Cumberland can with any truth apply; nor, in fact to any of Mr. Romney's pictures painted at any time; but

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Cumberland's propensity to humour was so irresistible, that he was frequently led to indulge it at the expense of his friends. I shall describe two of the sketches, to shew that there was no want of appropriate expression or action in the design of this picture.—I must premise, however, that that force of expression and that energy of action, peculiar to historic compositions, are not to be expected in a family-picture, which can only represent the habits and occupations of domestic life. Sometimes, indeed, it may baffle the efforts of the greatest painter to impart intelligence to stupidity: but Mr. Romney had the *Promethean* power of giving animation to clay as much as any man; for if there was a spark of sense in his sitter he would elicit it. I remember his telling me once what difficulty he had with a sitter in order to accomplish a little expression. The gentleman was from the country and an attorney; and though his profession required intelligence, yet his countenance gave no indication of it. To remove a settled dulness that pervaded his features, Mr. Romney made many attempts, starting every popular topic of conversation; but all in vain: at length, by some uncommon chance, he happened to mention *hunting*; at the sound of which word, a ray of animation immediately sparkled in the eyes of his sitter, and imparted a certain degree of vivacity to his countenance. Mr. Romney took his measures accordingly, and led him into the subject; after which he was relieved from any further attempts at conversation, as the worthy gentleman expatiated upon it with spirit until the picture was finished. Even upon persons to whom nature was less parsimonious of her favours, he knew that dulness would sometimes intrude; and, therefore, always wished that some friends should accompany his sitters, both for the purpose already mentioned, and also, to relieve himself from the double task—of painting, and of keeping up a forced conversation at the same time.

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With respect to the close-buckled bob-wig*, I admit that it is a most unpicturesque appendage; but no blame attaches to the painter, the fault is in the fashion of the times. It has, indeed, sometimes had a substitute in a velvet-cap, but that must have been with the concurrence of the sitter. I do not, however, regard a periwig as being much more natural and becoming; and yet that is the head-dress in which Reynolds has painted Garrick. Mr. Romney was particularly alive to ridicule, and, knowing his feelings in that respect, I do not wonder that he turned the picture to the wall. Wit is a mischievous talent in an unfeeling critic; for a rude sarcasm may so ruffle those fine sensibilities, on which the efforts of genius depend, as to render abortive the noblest conceptions of the mind. Presumptuous wit is apt to usurp the privilege of wisdom, and the modest artist never thinks of questioning its authority. Even the mildest display of humour, when applied to Mr. Romney's works, was sufficient to damp his genius, and paralyze his efforts. His too sensitive and diffident mind was apt to imagine, that where the humourist could affix any ludicrous idea, there must of necessity be a deviation from truth and nature; not considering that the finest productions

* "I brought Garrick to see his pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour; a large family piece unluckily arrested his attention; a gentleman in a close-buckled bob-wig and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children, (some sitting, some standing) had taken possession of some yards of canvass very much, as it appeared, to their own satisfaction, for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. Upon this unfortunate groupe when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney—"Upon my word, Sir, said he, this is a very regular well-ordered family, and that is a very bright well-rubbed mahogany table, at which that motherly good lady is sitting, and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless a very excellent subject—to the state I mean, (if all these are his children) but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it, with that success, which I hope will attend you—." The modest artist took the hint, as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall."—Cumberland's Memoirs of himself.

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of genius have sometimes been made the sport of the wit, and that even the Æneid, the most legitimate of poems, has been travestied. The following anecdote affords a striking proof of his susceptibility in this respect. When captain Thomas Dalton, a gentleman remarkable for turning every thing to burlesque, was sitting to him for his portrait, he unfortunately cast his eyes upon a large picture that Mr. Romney was engaged with, and which was considerably advanced. The subject was, The Initiation of a Virgin into the mysteries of Bacchus, in which ceremony a number of graceful females were engaged. I have forgot what the precise observation was which he made; but it gave such a ludicrous, and unchaste turn to the whole design, that Mr. Romney too readily yielded to the impression, and the picture was forever laid aside. A painter should be cautious what kind of persons he admits into his private study; there are three sorts of people, whom he ought particularly to exclude—the humourist, who catches at every idea which he can distort and make ridiculous—the coarse unfeeling caviller, who ruffles and discourages diffident genius —and the indiscriminating flatterer, who, though he cannot impose upon the judgment of a man of sense; yet, by the constant incense of his fulsome compliments, may so far vitiate his feelings, as to render him less capable of bearing the judicious suggestions of liberal and enlightened criticism.—But to return to the sketches.

One represents the gentleman sitting in a reclining attitude on the right side of the picture, holding in his left hand a portfolio resting on the ground, and leaning with his right upon a small round table. Behind him, and rather to the right, is an easel supporting a picture, from which it may be inferred that he was an amateur painter*. His

* Such in fact he was and, I believe, exhibited some pictures: Wheatley the artist married his youngest daughter.

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wife is sitting behind the table. From the direction of their looks and the marking of their features, (though imperfectly made out,) it is manifest that strong attention must have been expressed in their countenances. The lady has her youngest child upon her lap, with which the two younger girls are playing. The oldest daughter, about thirteen or fourteen years old, is standing on the opposite side of the picture and turned towards her parents; she has a book in her hand and is in the act of suspending her reading, whilst her sister, a year younger, is standing by her, and, apparently, making some observations on what has just been read. A boy, the next in age, is standing, with the fore-finger of his right hand pressed upon his lips, in a listening attitude and with fixed attention. This figure unites the opposite groups, by which a graduated, contrasted, and harmonious composition is effected; and the expression of the whole is so clear and direct, as to falsify Mr. Cumberland's censure altogether.—Can there be a more appropriate occupation for a domestic party of parents and children, than that of reading, and communicating instruction?

Another sketch represents the father seated in the same part of the picture, with his right hand resting upon the table, on which a book lies open: he seems to be explaining a passage which he has just read. The mother is placed on the opposite side of the table, leaning upon it with her right elbow, and resting her face upon her hand. She is slightly bending forward, and seems to be listening with due attention to the observations of her husband. The head of the boy is introduced between them, as if eager to catch instruction from his father's comments. Next to the mother stands the oldest daughter, bearing in her arms the youngest child; but still directing her attention towards her father: her next sister is standing by her, with a basket of flowers on her arm, and equally attentive: these three form a

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distinct group. A dog intervenes between them and the two youngest girls, who are placed on the left side of the picture playing with a doll upon a seat; the bigger is represented upon her knees. The composition of this design consists of three groups, so well combined as to constitute a complete and connected whole, which I hold to be one of the most legitimate distributions of figures that can be imagined.—One might almost say of a conversation, or historical composition, what has been said of a convivial party;—that it should not consist of more than the Muses, nor of fewer than the Graces.

Pictures which admit of a number of figures, and various episodical groups, though properly called *historical*, do not constitute the highest order of painting. Grand art is the *dramatic* and *epic*, in which one great and simple action seizes and absorbs all the feelings of the spectator; and either petrifies with horror, or melts with pity, the sympathies of the heart, according to the influence of the subject. I shall just mention two pictures, allowed to have been the finest that the world ever saw, to illustrate my doctrine: first, the celebrated one by Timanthes, representing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, in which there was a gradation of sympathetic sorrow till it arrived at the acme of pathos: in order, however, to give the utmost effect to the expression, it became necessary not to fritter away the passion by numerous figures and subdivisions, but to produce grandeur and force by the means of simplicity and concentration. The other is the Transfiguration by Raffaelle; I mean the lower part of that picture, in which there is one impressive action; and, had the number of figures been increased, the simplicity, force, and effect would have been diminished in the same ratio. The art of grouping and combining figures is highly meritorious, but the soul of painting consists in action and expression; and these are rendered more effective by being simple and grand.

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In 1769 he exhibited a Family-piece, containing the portraits of Sir George Warren, his lady, and daughter. This picture was highly extolled by the public, and brought him still more into notice. According to a design in one of his sketch books, Lady Warren is represented as seated in a graceful and easy posture, with a fronting attitude; but with her face slightly turned to her right, having her left elbow leaning upon a pedestal, and the hand extended over her daughter's shoulder, a girl about six or seven years old, who is standing by her. The young lady has her hands gently crossed over her bosom, and is caressing a little bird, which she holds in one hand. Sir George, habited in a picturesque style, is standing rather to the left, and somewhat more backward in the picture than his lady. He has his right arm moderately extended, and is directing her attention to a distant object. The composition is beautiful, correct, and natural. And the simplicity, grace, and feeling expressed in the figure and character of Miss Warren, are admirable. This picture was at Pointon Hall, Cheshire.

Among Mr. Romney's earliest and most esteemed friends was William Cockin, with whom he became acquainted at Lancaster, where the latter practised the humble, but meritorious profession of a teacher of arithmetic and writing*. In 1769 this gentleman addressed a poetical epistle to Mr. Romney, in which, though called a journey, he rather gives an account of his own reflections than of the occurrences which took place in his travelling from London to Westmorland. It was afterwards printed in 1776, along with some other poems by the same author. An extract from it will shew how correct an opinion he had formed of Mr. Romney's talents, and how completely his prediction has been verified.

* For further particulars see the appendix.

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"But hold! my friend, if mirth and heartfelt glee
Still touch your soul, complete these traits for me;
The favorite piece eludes my nicest care;—
'Tis your's to charm where poets must despair,
Yes, your's to charm.—To what indulgent heav'n
Has tow'rds thy art most bountifully giv'n,
(Thy nicest knowledge of th' impassioned face,
Conceptions true of dignity and grace,
Colours from beauteous nature, clear and chaste,
A flowing pencil, industry, and taste,)
Let but experience add th' unerring line,
The purer laws of classical design,
Nor doubt to emulate what we admire
In Guido's grace, Corregio's soften'd fire,
The num'rous charms, which Vandyke's tints display,
And be the Reynolds of thy latter day."

The next year (1770) he quitted the Free Society, which began to dwindle, and exhibited with the Chartered Society in Spring Gardens. To the catalogue of this Society, in the above mentioned year, he contributed two pictures,—one representing a female in the character of *Melancholy*, and the other, in that of *Mirth*. These personifications were borrowed from the poetic fancy of Milton, as displayed in the exquisite poems of L'Allegro, and Il Penseroso. Previously to the sending of these pictures to the exhibition room, he received the following letter from Mr. Cumberland.

Saturday Night, 30th March.

"Sir,

"Since I waited upon you this morning my mind has been wholly

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occupied with reflecting upon your fine Compositions, which you are preparing for public exhibition. You will receive it only as a mark of ignorance, which means to be friendly, when I suggest to you a doubt of the title, which I understand you intend to give to your characters. If they are to be described under the terms of *L' Allegro e Penseroso,* I think your dramatis personæ will be liable to the following objections.

"In the first place, the titles are not classical, they are modern, barbarous, and affected. I am not master of so much Italian as to know whether they are proper, but I conceive not; they are borrowed from poetry, and by bringing Milton's descriptions to our minds, they rob your ideas of their originality. Descriptive poetry has been frequently assisted by painting, but I think the latter art has seldom excelled when the pencil has copied after the pen. Mr. West is now transcribing an ode of Horace upon canvass, and has flagrantly failed. I fancy he did not take his *Death of General Wolfe* from the paltry poem called *Quebec* or the *Conquest of Canada.* No, Sir, let the poets wait upon you, and give your figures their natural titles in their own language, or in established classical terms. The solemn figure is strictly that of the muse *Melpomene;* and Mr. Reynolds has led the way in calling the other *Euphrosyne.* I think I should render those into English by the titles of *Meditation* and *Mirth.*

"You will receive this as nothing more than a suggestion entirely submitted to your better judgment, and of very little importance upon the whole; but it is the subscription of my mite, and you are richly welcome to it.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"RICHD. CUMBERLAND."

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Had these pictures, however, been called *L' Allegra* and *La Penserosa*, I see no just objection to these titles. They, by having been adopted by Milton, had acquired a kind of classical character; and, besides, the age in which Milton lived, was classical as far as concerns Italian literature. I do not altogether concur with Mr. Cumberland in the other opinions which he has expressed in this letter. Poetry may occasionally borrow its ideas from painting, but it is generally the province of the latter to represent the realities of history and the fictions of poetry. Sometimes, indeed, in those imaginary representations which are not immediately derived from natural objects, but are of a compound character, having nature for their basis, such as sylphs, fairies, and the like; the painter has full liberty to follow his own ideas, and to deviate in what manner he pleases from the fictions of the poet, still, however, keeping in view a certain affinity with nature; as, for instance, in the representation of the airy beings in the Tempest, and the Midsummer Night's Dream, in which he has great latitude for the display of his own independent fancy and invention.

These pictures had great merit. The drapery of Melancholy was particularly fine; its forms, were broad, and grand, and executed with such gusto that Mr. West, many years after, complimented Mr. Romney by saying it was equal to Raffaelle. It was in allusion to this picture that Mr. Cumberland wrote the following verses; obviously with the friendly intention of bringing Mr. Romney more into notice: they were inserted in the Public Advertiser at the time.

"When Gothic rage had put the arts to flight
And wrapt the world in universal night,
When the dire northern swarm with seas of blood
Had drown'd creation in a second flood,

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When all was void, disconsolate and dark,
Rome in her ashes found one latent spark,
She, not unmindful of her ancient name,
Nurs'd her last hope and fed the sacred flame;
From breast to breast the patriot ardour flew,
While dawning genius open'd to the view.
Still as it grew, fresh streams of orient light
Beam'd on the world and cheer'd the fainting sight;
Rous'd from the tombs of the illustrious dead
Immortal science rear'd her mournful head;
And mourn she shall to time's extremest hour
The dire effects of Omar's savage power,
When rigid Amrou's too obedient hand
Made Alexandria blaze at his command;
Six months he fed the sacrilegious flame
With the stor'd volumes of recorded fame:
There died all memory of the great and good,
Then Greece and Rome were finally subdu'd.
Yet monkish ignorance had not quite effac'd
All that the chisel wrought, the pencil trac'd;
Some precious fragments of the ancient hoard
Or happy chance, or curious search restor'd;
Fir'd with the thought, the kindling artist gaz'd,
And caught perfection from the work he prais'd.
Of painters then the celebrated race
Rose into fame with each attendant grace;
Still, as it spread, the wonder-dealing art
Refin'd the manners and improv'd the heart;
Where'er the artist wav'd his plastic hand
A new creation rose at his command;

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Darkness dispers'd and Italy became
Once more the seat of elegance and fame.
Late, very late, on this sequester'd isle,
The heav'n-descended art was seen to smile;
Seldom she came to Britain's stormy coast,
And short her stay, just seen, admir'd and lost.
Reynolds, at length, her favourite suitor, bore
The blushing stranger to his native shore;
He by no mean, no selfish motives sway'd,
To public view held forth the liberal maid,
Call'd his admiring countrymen around,
Freely declar'd what transports he had found;
Rous'd them from sloth, provok'd them from despair,
Bade them, like him, to woo, and win the fair;
Told them that merit would alike impart
To him, or them, a passage to her heart.
Fir'd at the thought, all came to view her charms,
All strive, all throng, to clasp her in their arms.
See *Cotes*, and *Dance*, and *Gainsborough* seize the spoil,
And ready *Mortimer* that laughs at toil;
Crown'd with fresh roses graceful *Humphry* stands,
While beauty grows immortal from his hands;
Stubbs like a lion springs upon his prey;
Next, bold eccentric *Wright* who hates the day;
Familiar *Zoffani* with comic art;
And *West* great painter of the human heart.
These, and yet more unnam'd, that to our eyes
Bid lawns and groves and tow'ring mountains rise,
Smooth the calm sea, or drive th' impetuous gale,
Point the bold rock, or strain the bursting sail.

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Some hunt 'midst fruit, and flow'ry wreaths for fame,
And *Elmer* springs it in the feather'd game.—
Apart, and bending o'er the azure tide,
With heav'nly Contemplation* by his side,
A pensive artist stands in studious mood,
With down-cast looks he eyes the ebbing flood;
No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
Himself as pure and patient as his art;
Nor sullen sorrow, nor intemp'rate joy
The even tenour of his thoughts destroy:
Shunn'd by the bold, unnotic'd by the proud,
He strays at distance from the clam'rous crowd;
A blushing, backward candidate for fame,
At once his country's honour, and its shame.
—Rous'd then at length, with honest pride inspir'd,
Romney, advance! be known, and be admir'd."

* "The few who attended the unfashionable exhibition at Spring Gardens, may possibly recollect to have seen a full-length figure, which answers to this character, painted by a Mr. Romney, a name totally unknown to the modern professors of virtu."

It was about this time, also, that he painted the portrait of Mrs. Cumberland; on which occasion Mr. Cumberland wrote the following complimentary verses which he afterwards (in 1789) introduced into his Novel of Arundel.

"Romney, thy chastest tints select to trace
The matron beauties of Eliza's face,
Dip thy bright pencil in cœrulean dyes,

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And animate the canvass with her eyes;
Paint, if thou canst, my kiss upon her cheek,
Give her a voice and bid the portrait speak;
Catch her dear image from a husband's heart,
And draw her pure and faultless as thy art."

In 1771 he exhibited six pictures, some of which require notice here; viz—A whole-length portrait of *Mrs. Yates in the character of the Tragic Muse.* This picture was highly spoken of at the time, both as a faithful likeness of that distinguished actress, and as a well conceived and correct representation of the tragic character; but it has since had the misfortune to be brought into comparison with Sir Joshua's celebrated portrait of Mrs. Siddons in the same character;—a comparison as unfair, as to compare the Pharsalia of Lucan with the Æneid of Virgil; the latter the production of mature age and cultivated genius, the former of youth and inexperience. When Mr. Romney painted this picture he had scarcely been eight years in London; and so far from having enriched his mind with foreign study, he had barely acquired the mechanical knowledge of his profession. Whereas Reynolds was in the meridian of his powers, having his mind richly stored with a profusion of fine ideas, gathered both from the study of the most exquisite works of art in Europe, and from the contemplation of all the living beauty of the age. His picture was produced in 1784, thirteen years after Mr. Romney's.—An inversion of the order of time which renders all comparison absurd. Besides I consider Mrs. Siddons at that time as the finest model in the world. Her features bore a strong resemblance to those of the Minerva; her eyes were piercing, and her forehead grand. After all, I partly agree with Miss Seward* that there are

* I have a very fine print of Sir Joshua's portrait of Mrs. Siddons in the Tragic Muse, but the defects, and incongruities of the situation and drapery amaze me—a heavy theatrical chair

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some incongruities in Reynold's picture. It is not well conceived, there is nothing poetical in placing her in a chair of state in the clouds; there wants "The tread majestic" of that awful imaginary Being: and the two mutes behind her are like nothing human or divine; but still, notwithstanding, it is a fine gorgeous picture; for gorgeous attire is not inconsistent with the Tragic queen:

let gorgeous tragedy,
In sceptered pall, *come sweeping* by.

She should, however, in my apprehension, be always represented as advancing with a slow and measured step; because it is not in nature for a person under the influence of strong emotions, to remain tranquil and quiescent; and because such a want of correspondence between feeling and action destroys the effect of the character altogether. The attitude and disposition of the drapery are taken from Michael Angelo's figure of the prophet Joel, in the *Cappella Sistina;* but not with Sir Joshua's usual success,—because they do not suit the subject. There is far more appropriate grandeur in the simple figure of Tragedy, in his admirable picture of Garrick between the theatrical muses. The genius of Reynolds was not eminently distinguished for inventive faculty; he frequently borrowed his ideas, and sometimes even from the most trumpery representations; but his mind had the faculty of imparting excellence to whatever he adopted, except when he borrowed from a genius more lofty than his own, as in the present instance. His forte was elegance and grace; but he might as well have attempted to bend the bow of Ulysses, as to make the grand ideas of Michael Angelo accord with his own. He thus becomes like a slender man dressed in a wide coat.—I never saw Mr. Romney's picture of Mrs. Yates except once; it was at the

of state on the clouds, gold-lace and pearls, plaited hair and the imperial tiara upon an allegorical figure, which sorrow, and high-souled resolve must be supposed to have incapacitated for the studied labours of the toilette.—Miss Seward's Letters vol. 2.

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Boydell-gallery, Cheapside. I well remember the occasion which carried me thither. It was to a dinner given by the old alderman to the distinguished artists, and promoters of the Shakspeare gallery. Mr. Romney from indisposition did not attend. The head of the table was graced by the presence of Lord Rodney and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The portrait of Mrs. Yates, and Mr. Northcote's picture of the Murder of the two Royal Infants in the Tower, were the only works of art there that made any impression upon my memory; the latter was afterwards removed to the Shakspeare gallery, and is, I think, among the best of that artist's performances; the assassins are admirably represented, but the children only so so.

An Officer conversing with a Brahmin. The officer was Major Pearson*, of the Honourable East India Company's service, a gentleman of an elegant and cultivated mind, who wisely and praise-worthily applied the riches which he had acquired in India, to the advancement of science, and the improvement of taste. He built an elegant house at Burton-in-Kendal, his native place, where he had a select and valuable library. He was the particular friend of the late Daniel Braithwaite, in whose possession I have seen a fine Head of the Major,

* In 1787 Mr. Romney began a picture intended as a companion to this; it represented Mrs. Wogan Browne seated at a table in the act of drawing, and Mr. Browne standing on the left of her, and reaching to a shelf of books. Mrs. Browne was nearly finished, and the rest of the picture in a state of great forwardness, so that a few hours of his painting would have completed the work. The price was two hundred Guineas. But Mr. Romney not having received the half price, and not being pressed to finish it, it remained in this state till he left Cavendish Square. I did not sell it with his other pictures, but kept it at the frame-maker's to take its chance. About two or three years after Mr. Romney's death, an offer was made through the frame-maker, of thirty Guineas for it; it was a dead weight upon me, and I was glad to get any thing for it; so I gave it up: it was to be finished by Mr. Oliver. I have thought it proper to mention this picture here because it comes within the list of those I proposed to mention.

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painted *en Medaillon* by Mr. Romney, from which a seal was engraved. In the picture exhibited, he is represented as standing under the shade of a spreading palm-tree, leaning upon his spontoon, and in earnest conversation with a Brahmin, who is seated on the opposite side of the picture, in appropriate simplicity of dress and attitude. Beyond the priest stands a black servant, listening with attention to their discourse. The back ground represents a view of the adjacent country, and the fort of which the Major was commandant. This picture may, perhaps, be regarded as the best he painted before he went to Italy.

A Lady and a Child, which might more properly have been called The Virgin and Child; as it resembles an Italian picture of the *Madonna e Bambino.* This picture and that of Major Pearson were in the possession of Mr. Wogan Browne of Ireland, who married the only daughter and heiress of Major Pearson.

The last picture I shall notice from the catalogue of this year, is that of a *Beggar-Man* (three quarters.) It is now in my possession, and is only remarkable as having been painted at one sitting; whereby the handling is more marked and bold, and the manner altogether different from his usual style at that time. It was probably intended as an experiment; it is however a fine head.

In 1772 he exhibited two three quarters portraits; one was that of Humphry the miniature painter, his future fellow-traveller, which, I have always understood, was a remarkably fine picture; it is now, I believe, at Knowle.—Here terminates the list of Mr. Romney's exhibited pictures.

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In the autumn of this year (1772) he intended to have gone to Italy, and to have passed the following winter at Rome; but was prevented by a violent fever, and afterwards by an influx of business, so that he was not able to disengage himself till the following spring. His friend Humphry, in the midst of a lucrative business as a miniature painter, in which he had eminently distinguished himself; was determined to aspire to a higher branch of the profession, and to lay the foundation of his studies at Rome. He and Mr. Romney agreed to travel together.

It may be mentioned here as a striking proof of Mr. Romney's enthusiastic and disinterested passion for his art, that, although it appears from authentic testimony, that his gains must have averaged one hundred pounds a month for the last four months previous to his going abroad, when his price for a three-quarters portrait was only ten or twelve guineas; yet he abandoned all considerations of emolument, so alluring to most minds, and devoted himself entirely to the study of his profession for two years and a quarter in a foreign country. After discharging certain debts which he had contracted during his recent illness, and leaving two hundred pounds in the hands of his banker, he set off with the remainder for Italy. On his return to England, he found himself *minus* fifty pounds, with a debt incurred by his brothers of nearly the same amount. Independence of fortune is, undoubtedly, essential to every man's comfort, and is in general the sole motive of his exertions. No prudent man should lose sight of it; but the man of genius should be impelled by a nobler and more exalted stimulus—the ambition to attain pre-eminence. Avarice may sometimes continue to stimulate when independence is acquired; but nothing will lead to true excellence except a pure and disinterested ambition. To reach the head of his profession was Mr.

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Romney's great incentive; every thing yielded to this feeling, was even sacrificed to it; and at that time, perhaps, it might justly have been said, (as in fact it was by some,) that his ambition had got the better of his prudence: the event, however, has justified his conduct;—for, in consequence of his residence abroad, he was enabled to acquire, not only independence of fortune, but preeminence in art. Neither the advanced period of his life, nor the delicacy of his health, nor the multitude of possible contingences which might terrify the imagination of a less enthusiastic traveller, were sufficient to deter him from his purpose; not to mention, moreover, what ought to have been a very serious consideration with him,—that the time in which he was to reap the fruits of his foreign studies, would thereby be much abridged. His aspiring genius, however, at length prevailed in spite of a tardy and imperfect education; and he accomplished that in the decline of life when the fervour of youth begins to subside, which, under more fortunate circumstances, he might have effected before the meridian of manhood. What Vasari has said of Albert Durer, might with great truth be applied to him. *Nel vero, se quest' huomo si raro, si diligente, et si universale, havesse potuto studiare le cose di Roma nella sua gioventu, sarebbe stato il miglior pittore de' paesi nostri.* He was in his thirty ninth year when he set off for Italy, so that he may be said to have been full seventeen years behind in the regular course of study. Vandyck went to Italy before he was twenty, West when twenty two, and Reynolds twenty six; and Rafaelle died when he was thirty seven.

He was now become well known, and had acquired by the display of his talents the countenance and friendship of several individuals of distinguished rank and taste. He had frequented the Duke of Richmond's fine gallery of casts in Privy Garden, and, during his studies

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there, had attracted the notice and conciliated the friendship of his Grace, who to the last manifested a great regard for him. The Duke was one of those who encouraged him to prosecute his studies in Italy, as was also, his royal highness the Duke of Gloucester, who gave him a letter of recommendation to Pope Ganganelli; through the means of which he obtained permission from his Holiness to erect scaffolds in the Vatican, in order to copy from those celebrated pictures of Raffaelle which decorate that palace.

Mr. Romney and his companion did not leave London till the 20th of March. They sailed from Dover to Calais, and thence proceeded directly to Paris. Here they stopped about a fortnight, taking a cursory survey of every thing that was interesting in art.

As it is evident from the testimony of all Mr. Romney's correspondents, and from his own frequent confession, that writing was his aversion: it seems matter of wonder that he should have been induced,—either to gratify the importuning curiosity of friendship, or to fill up a vacant hour in the absence of the pencil, or from any other cause,—to write a brief journal of his observations and adventures on his way to Italy. Such a one however I have found, hastily scribbled in a sketch-book; and, though it is only the first sketch, is superficial and leaves off incomplete; yet, as it communicates the feelings, impressions, and observations of an artist, it cannot but be, to a certain degree, interesting.

It seems to have been intended for his friend Thomas Greene, but whether it was ever sent to that gentleman I should doubt.

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CURSORY OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

MADE

DURING A JOURNEY FROM ENGLAND TO GENOA.

By George Romney.

"Dear Sir,

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I am now at Paris in good health and spirits, and purpose leaving it in three or four days. I am very much pleased with the polite manners of the people, their magnificent palaces, and the fine collections of pictures which they contain. I must not, however, omit to tell you how much those scenes, which you and I have formerly trodden together, are changed, or my notions and feelings are become different; what with the French imitating us, and we them, the manners and dresses of the two great cities are brought pretty nearly upon a level; so much so, that if you were conveyed here asleep, into the midst of a French assembly, and then awoke with your ears closed, you would hardly distinguish it from an English one; the principal difference I have observed in dress is, that the men, from the Prince to the Valet de Chambre, wear muffs of an enormous size, slung round their waists, and always *chapeau bras,* though the weather is colder here than I have felt, in England the last winter. I have not seen a woman's hat on, in any order of people. It is a part of dress which gives much softness to the face by throwing it into half shadow of any colour that the wearer chooses. The English ladies dress with more elegance

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and greater variety; and as to beauty and sentiment, the French hold no comparison with them.—The taste for painting, and the art itself are at the lowest ebb; simplicity they call vulgar, and pure elegance passes for gravity and heaviness; every thing must have the air of a dancer or actor, the colour of a painted beauty, and the dress recommended by the barber, tailor, and mantua-maker. I think there is no better criterion whereby to judge of the minds of a people, than by their general taste; the correspondence certainly holds good with respect to the French. They are a people that have no idea of simplicity, and are totally void of character and feeling. Nothing can be a greater proof of their degeneracy of taste, than the indifference, with which they treat every thing produced by those great masters, who have held the first rank for so many ages; viz., Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, &c. They say their works are too dark, gloomy, and heavy. With them every thing must be light, false, fantastical, and full of flutter and extravagance—like themselves. Happily for us, we have to return to a country where manly sense and feeling still remain, and where true taste is growing up; that kind which inspired the Italian schools.

"We have no reason hitherto, from what we have seen, to repent of our journey; but on the contrary, to be inspired with double ardour to pursue the plan we have formed."

"Dear Sir,

"On the 9th of April we left Paris in a Diligence for Lyons, the company consisted of ten persons, two of whom being able to speak a little English, rendered our journey very agreeable. We passed through the finest country I ever saw; one while it was even, and every acre cultivated for corn, without a hedge to be seen; and then

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hilly and full of vineyards,—one day we travelled on the banks of the Yonne winding through the finest champaign you can imagine, skirted with hills; then over rude romantic hills, till we came to the banks of the Saone, (at Challon,) where we took a conveyance by water, which brought us to Lyons in a day and a half, through a still more beautiful country; having on one side a range of grand mountains, which continued till we approached this most romantically situated town, full of liveliness and gaiety; where I have now been these six days confined with a slight cold, and sore throat.—Lyons is situated on a point of land where two fine rivers the Saone and the Rhone unite. The quay of the Rhone is very beautiful, and above a mile long. This town contains several public buildings; particularly a hospital, a very fine structure, but not finished. The church of the order of Chartreux with a dome, in the centre of which is the altar, composed of four columns with an entablature of a circular form, which only ties the pillars on each side. It has a canopy of drapery and ornaments supported by cherubs suspended in the air, the whole together has the most charming effect.—The women are of a middle size, with all their forms round and full grown; full chested, and with necks as round as the Venus de Medici; their faces not very beautiful, and browner than at Paris.

"We left Lyons April 22nd and hired a boat to carry us to Avignon in two days, but the second it blew very hard, and obliged us to stop at St. Esprit.

"The Rhone is a rapid river, and the prospects from it are in general very beautiful. The latter part of the first day we saw a range of very grand mountains covered with snow, called the Grenoble mountains. The river likewise affords several grand and picturesque

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views; some of the towns are particularly so, and group well with the hills and rocks. On the way from St. Esprit to Nismes, and about twelve miles from the latter place, is a Roman aqueduct, perhaps the most beautiful specimen of that kind of architecture in the world. Nismes is situated facing the south east, with a range of hills forming the quarter of a circle to the north west; the plains before it are very extensive, beautiful, and fertile; the are covered with olive-trees, and the ground between each tree is sown with some kind of grain, or planted with vines: they are a part of the plains of Languedoc. Here are several pieces of Roman architecture; an Amphitheatre, a square building called the Maison Quarree, and a temple of Diana. This temple faces the morning sun; but the front is quite defaced; the inside is of the corinthian order, with an altar facing the entrance. The spaces on each side of the altar have flat ceilings, very beautiful; the body of the temple is a simple arch, with ribs or projections about two feet and a half wide, and four inches deep; the intervals are of the same width, they cross from side to side, and have a good effect. A great part of the roof is fallen in, and lies in heaps of ruins, which, with fragments of cornices, capitals, bases, columns, &c. form together a picturesque assemblage of beautiful objects. It may be seen in Paladio. Before the temple there has been a bath and fountain, which were repaired by Francis the first.

"The Maison Quarree was likewise repaired by Francis, and converted into a church; it has nine columns on each side, and six at each end, without pedestals; the space between them is the same as the plinth of the base of the columns. It has a portico which goes to the fourth column, and a beautiful door-case with an architrave round it, and a cornice without a frize, with columns. The capitals and cornice are carved with exquisite taste; the columns are sunk into

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the wall a third. The wall is grooved at the joints about an inch wide, and continues to the sixth column. It is the most chaste and beautiful building imaginable.

"The Amphitheatre is about the size of Ranelagh within; the seats, which are thirty in number, rising one above another, are composed of stones about six feet long, and a foot and a half square. The architecture is plain, and not in so good a taste as the other buildings.

"Upon the hill behind the town, are the ruins of a high tower, from the top of which the sea may be seen, off Marseilles; it served as a light-house on extraordinary occasions.

"From Nismes we went to Avignon, a place famous for having been the residence of many Popes when Rome was unhealthy. It is beautifully situated on the banks of the Rhone, which divides and forms an island of about five or six acres; across which and the two branches of the river, there was formerly a bridge nearly a quarter of a mile long. Avignon is placed on a small hill, with an easy ascent on all sides, except that next the river, which is a steep rock of about two hundred feet in height, with the citadel on the top, and an old palace where the Popes resided. From thence is a delightful prospect to the north east. There is a very grand mountain about ten miles off, the top of which is covered with snow; and on the opposite side of the river, to the north, is a Chartreuse on a little hill, very beautifully and strongly situated. This religious order seems to have chosen all the most beautiful parts of France for their habitations. To the south is a fine cultivated country with hills on both sides.

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"We were much pleased with the dress of the lower order of women at Avignon; their heads were dressed with cambric, or muslin—a cap with a plain border round the face, which projected very forward all round, and a kind of cambric handkerchief, which tied under the chin, and covered the whole head in a very picturesque manner. Their faces are much browner than at Paris, which makes their linen look very white, and gives the whole head a very beautiful effect. As white is said to repel the rays of the sun more than any other colour, this may be their reason for wearing so much linen round their heads in so hot a climate; as Avignon is supposed to be hotter in summer than any other part of France. They wear little jackets of different colours, but principally black, without stays; and a handkerchief round the neck, of coloured silk, or muslin, that covers most of it, and meets between the breasts. Their petticoats are of a different colour from that of their jackets, and reach a little below their knees; which gives them a very light and airy appearance, and exposes limbs round and cleanly formed. This may be supposed to be very delightful to the eye of a painter, who had always been accustomed to see women dressed in stays, with petticoats almost covering the heels.

"From thence we went to Aix in a cabriolet, which took us a day and a half, as they go about the pace of an English waggon. The country was sometimes hilly, with pretty valleys occasionally intervening. Aix is situated amongst the hills in a fine air; it is well built and clean. There is a grand walk in the middle of the town, with four rows of trees; and in the middle part, which is the widest, there are four fountains; one is a spring of warm water. At the termination of the walk to the south, is a prospect filled with little country houses.

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"From Aix we went to Marseilles (which is about fifteen miles) over a hilly country, till we came within three miles of the latter place. At the descent of the hill we had a view of Marseilles, situated in a valley about five or six miles across, scattered all over with houses about a hundred or two hundred yards from each other, which has a disagreeable effect. On the west is a bay, which forms a semicircle from the north side of the town to the west—or rather south west; thence the sea continues to the south. In the bay, about half a league south west of the harbour's mouth, are two islands with fortifications. On the south east are very high mountains, barren and rocky, which extend to the north east, and from thence are hills which run to the north west. We entered Marseilles on the north side, through a street with an easy descent, which opened into a public walk with very high well built houses on each side. Being of great extent, and shaded with a row of lofty trees on both sides, it presents a striking view as you enter the town. The harbour is very beautiful and secure; but not deep enough to float a man of war. The entrance is about a hundred and fifty yards wide, with a fort on each side, but not very strong; it is about a quarter of a mile long, with a very fine quay, particularly on the north side: at the east end is the arsenal; on the west are carpenters' yards, warehouses, &c.; behind them a very strong building, which is the barracks for the soldiers; and on the same side to the south, close to the town, is a very steep hill with a strong castle on the top, which commands a fine prospect of the town and harbour, the country and adjacent mountains. The houses are in general, good, and very high, six or seven stories. The women are more beautiful than at Paris, and dress very gay, with less paint.

"We left Marseilles the 26th of April, and having passed along the valley in which it is situated, till the mountains that encompass it

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draw near together, began to ascend one of the most beautiful valleys I ever saw, with a small river winding down the middle of it, having in front, to the north east, a most picturesque and grand rocky mountain of angular forms.—Sometimes there was rising ground, covered with pines of a brownish green, which gave a beautiful opposition to the light grey mountains, shadowed in parts by clouds that hung over, of a blue grey tint, and broken with shrubs of a brownish hue; while parts of other mountains of angular shapes rose behind in shadow. In some places, groups of trees, of the most beautiful forms, and of a tender green, rose from the river side; through the openings of which might be seen the blue mountains, broken with the slender streight stems of a light grey speckled colour, and with beautiful branching foliage: in other places very tall bulrushes mingled with them. This scenery continued varying till the mountains almost closed, with rocks of a very steep and romantic shape; while the trees on the margin of the river, became still more beautiful, if possible, from the effect of the evening sun. Now its rays, half intercepted by the branching trees, fell upon the white bulrushes; then the rich margin of the brook, abounding with all kinds of beautiful plants and shrubs, was in shadow; the road all the while winding with the river, till it opened into a delightful valley about two miles in length and one in breadth; when it parted from the stream, and, passing through the valley, brought us to a little village at its extremity, where we lodged for the night. From our chamber-window we had a beautiful prospect of the scenery, which was more like that described in romance, than any I had ever seen before: it seemed to be a place peculiarly well suited for the study of landscape painting.—The next day we met with nothing remarkable but the wood famous for robberies, which continues for some miles, and which we passed through in the afternoon. The road continued winding in a

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narrow valley, round very high hills covered principally with firs, without a soul to be seen, except here and there a goatherd; at the termination of which was a little village, where we lodged for the night. The following morning we passed through a most beautiful valley, quite level, cultivated like a garden, and full of all kinds of fruit trees, with very high mountains on every side; till we came in sight of the sea, near which we stopped to dine at a small town called Frejus. We saw the ruins of an amphitheatre as we entered, and those of an aqueduct as we left it, both very manifest. There were some exceedingly fine views of the country we had already passed through, and well suited for the study of a landscape painter; they were of a character different from any thing we had seen before. From thence we ascended a very high mountain, Esterelles, and continued winding near the top till we came to a farm-house and inn, very romantically situated in the midst of grand scenery, about six miles from the town where we dined. We had many very grand views of the tops of mountains rising one behind another, all covered with wood; except where it was burnt in the war before the last, by the Sardinians and Austrians.

"The next morning we descended the mountains till we came to the shore of the Mediterranean, and continued till we reached Antibes. This is a frontier town with a pretty harbour; it has a double wall round it, and a fort which seems to be very strong. Thence we had a view of Nice, and of the Appenine mountains rising behind it; and of other mountains joining, which run all along the shore, and rise one behind another till they are lost in the clouds. After dinner we set forward for Nice, which is about three leagues distant. When we came within a league, we crossed a river (Var) that separates France from Italy, and arrived at Nice at six o'clock.

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"Nice is close to the sea, on one side is a river, and on the other a high rocky hill, which had formerly a strong castle; it was blown up by Lewis the fourteenth. The harbour is very small, and situate on the other side of the hill in a flat and fertile bottom; the approach to it from the town, is round the hill on the land side.

"Several little country houses are scattered about, likewise on the sides of the hills which are much cultivated; the whole having a beautiful effect. The town is small, and its situation pleasant, enjoying a fine temperate air. Over a mountain to the east, two miles from Nice, is Villa-Franca, a very small town and harbour, with a pretty long bay. It is a steep descent on all sides to the brink of the bay, so that it can have but little communication with the country. The day we arrived at Nice, being Sunday and the 2d of May, we saw may-poles erected in several streets, and in the evening, rings of women, about fifteen or twenty in each, hand in hand, dancing round them, like *The Hours of Guido*, and singing beautiful airs. Their movements were sometimes slow, and increased gradually till they became very quick, then slow again; they were perfectly in time with one another, and moved with the greatest vivacity and spirit. The air of antiquity it carried along with it, had the most enchanting effect. I thought myself removed two thousand years back, and a spectator of scenes in Arcadia. About four o'clock the next morning, I was awaked by a boy in the street, singing with amazing spirit and simplicity, some of the sweetest Italian airs I had ever heard. The next day we engaged the captain of a French Tartane, to convey us to Leghorn, for four louis d'ors and a half, and sailed the Thursday following. After being two days at sea, we were forced back by contrary winds; we put to sea twice more, and twice more were obliged to return. On holy-thursday Mr. Aubert accom-

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panied us to the top of a somewhat high hill, about two miles off, where the ancient city Cemenelion stood; we ascended by an old paved road which leads to the top. We called on a Mr. Lyon, who has a very pretty house, that commands a most delightful prospect. To the south you have a very extensive view of the sea, and on each side, beautiful and rich valleys, encompassed with high hills and mountains that form a kind of amphitheatre. Being holy-day, the young men and women of the neighbouring peasants were assembled in Mr. Lyon's yard with a fiddler, and dancing minuets and jigs at the time we entered; which gave us no small delight. A little time after, they formed a ring round a may-pole, and danced and sung altogether, hand in hand, with that glee, which arises from innocence, simplicity, and liveliness. The airs were light, sprightly, and elegant. The women were dressed in muslin and cotton, mostly white; some had changeable silk bodies and sleeves, but all without stays; which gave a lightness and flexibility to their bodies and limbs, and a variety and grace to their action, which were exceedingly pleasing.

"At the distance of about two hundred yards are the ruins of an ancient amphitheatre, of an oval form, and about forty yards in length; it is a plain building. Close by it, is a gate-way, which opens into an extensive garden with an avenue of trees that runs across it; this afforded a very cool and refreshing shade. There were several peasants playing at bowls when we passed through it. On one side is a very handsome house, but out of repair; a little beyond it, close to the avenue of trees, are the ruins of a Roman temple dedicated to Diana, likewise a plain building. The termination of the walk opened to the front of a church and monastery, situate close to a steep declivity of the hill. They are both plain structures; the latter forms a quadrangle, and has a pretty garden in the middle. On

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the south side of the monastery, is a long garden applied to various uses; every monk has a small part allotted to himself, which he cultivates in whatever manner he pleases. On the right hand, at the bottom of the garden, is a small winding path, which leads up to a higher garden, more wild and woody; this was formerly the citadel, and is about eight yards above the other garden: as we ascended we observed some pieces of the old Roman wall joined to the rock. On the west side of the higher garden is the temple of Diana above mentioned; on the east side there is a steep declivity to the valley that leads to Nice. The width of the valley is principally occupied by the bed of the river of grey stones, which is filled when the snow melts from the Appenine mountains; but in general, the river is very small. The upper garden is about thirty yards square, from which there is an exceedingly fine prospect. To the south, you see Nice, and close to it, on the east side, a rocky hill crowned with the ruins of an old castle; and close to that, the little harbour with its various shipping. On the east of the harbour, from a point projecting into the sea, rises a small hill, the bottom of which is covered with wood, principally olive trees, which become more scattered as they rise up the side; about midway the hill becomes smooth, and is composed of large simple forms, tinted, as it might seem, with brown ochre and grey. On the summit is a small castle, which adds beauty to the whole. It is garrisoned by about eight invalids and a governor. It was attacked in the war of forty five by the French, who with great difficulty took it. Admiral Matthews had a fleet at the time in the bay of Villa-Franca, close by on the east, and assisted the Piedmontese with guns. After it was taken he made his escape with some difficulty. To the east of the convent, are high barren hills with rugged rocks towards the bottom; and behind them, lofty mountains. To the north, the valley with its river winds round the hills, and is

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lost among the mountains, which exhibit a very rude and rugged appearance. The convent of St. Pont (for women) is about a quarter of a mile from this; it is a very large and beautiful building, with a church situate on a little eminence, by the side of the river. It is very extraordinary that the policy of so many different nations should suffer so large a proportion of both sexes to be secluded from the world as useless members of society; one may suppose that upon an average every twentieth woman, and every fortieth man, are shut up for life, to spend their time in idleness and sloth. If religion were their motive, they might find sufficient time to serve God, and still follow any occupation of life; and thus become serviceable to their relations, their friends, and their fellow creatures in general. They will say it is virtue to abstain from sexual intercourse; but surely it is more commendable to marry, since, by so doing, they not only become industrious in bringing up their children, and contribute to the propagation of mankind; but they retain the affections of the heart to the latest old age; the monks, on the contrary, by choking their love for women, (which they must do, or indulge clandestine and criminal attachments,) extinguish all the social affections, which are the basis of religion; and become idle and useless beings, full of pride, envy, malice, and false religion, which consists of mechanical forms and self-applause.—After we had remained at Nice three weeks and a day, and had made three fruitless attempts to sail; we engaged to go with Mr. Aubert in a Felucca to Genoa. To our mortification, however, the Tartane sailed the day before us, and got clear off with a fair wind.

"The Nissard women are very ordinary looking, they are remarkably brown and rather masculine; notwithstanding, they are exceedingly pleasing in the dances.

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"We left Nice the 25th of May with a fair wind, and arrived at Monton within an hour and a half, which is fifteen miles. We had a fine view of Monaco, the capital of a very small province. It is eight miles from Nice, and is situated upon a flat rock, about thirty or forty feet high from the water and mostly very steep. It seemed to have a strong fortification round it, particularly where the declivity is accessible; and the whole had a fine effect, especially the palace, which is rather large. A very steep mountain rises behind, the bottom of which is cultivated; there is very little flat ground. Monton is a pretty town, and belongs to the same prince, who has likewise a small palace near it, very beautifully situated at the foot of exceedingly grand and rude mountains rising steep and pointed, and of the most romantic forms I ever saw. The produce of the place is lemons; from the flowers they make citron water, which is reckoned to bring an interest of ten or twelve per cent. for their money. The produce from the lemon trees in the prince's garden, is manufactured for his use. His revenue is estimated, with his estates in France, at twenty thousand pounds sterling annually. He holds a court when at Monaco, and has monarchal power. The King of France allows him a garrison for Monaco.

"Mr. Aubert took us to the house of Mr. Albans, a great merchant and polite gentleman, where we continued till the 27th, on which day, at ten o'clock in the morning, having a fair wind, we set sail for Genoa, which is a hundred and forty five miles distant. We had a very fine prospect of the coast all the way, which consists of lofty mountains of every form and shape, but in general very steep to the shore. There are many little towns, beautifully situated, but poor; as there is very little level ground to cultivate, their principal produce is from fruit trees. After the most delightful voyage ima-

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ginable, with a wind that carried us sometimes fourteen miles an hour, we reached Genoa about twelve o'clock at night; and continued in the boat in the harbour till three, the time when the gates were opened. The harbour has two moles or piers, which give it a circular form; it admits a swell of the sea that renders it insecure. Near one of the piers, on the left hand as you enter, is a light-house of great height. Thence rises a hill, which forms a crescent round the town and harbour; it rises very high behind the town, so that they call it a mountain, and sloping down again to the right, forms a head with a steep rock to the water. On each side of this hill is a valley that runs up into the country; and on each side, beyond these little valleys, are very high mountains, which give a grand effect to the town. The valleys are very rich, highly cultivated, and full of beautiful country houses. The town likewise forms a crescent close to the harbour; it is not large, but very beautiful, both in the whole, and in the parts. The streets are very narrow, but clean and well paved; the houses are high, in general five or six stories; the third or fourth is the best, which is very lofty, and the rooms large. The fronts are for the most part painted in imitation of different coloured marbles, architecture, and figures; but not unfrequently are real architecture in marble, laden with ornaments, so that they have more the appearance of palaces, than of the habitations of trades-people. There are many palaces; the Strada-Nuova and the Strada-Balbi consist entirely of them, and have a most magnificent appearance. It is seldom or never, that you can see any pure or chaste architecture; it is generally very luxuriant, grand, and heavy; all the fronts differ from each other; but as it is the style of the town, every thing seems right. All the effects of the streets and openings are very rich and grand. The painting of the houses has an uncommon effect, something like that produced by the scenery of a play-house, or by those

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representations of palaces described in romance, made for elegance and pleasure;—in short, it has a kind of holiday or gala appearance.

"May 29th, we went to see the Balbi palace, Strada-Balbi. The rooms are not large, but most beautifully fitted up. The ceilings are painted with allegorical subjects in Fresco. The subjects of some of the friezes are river gods among bulrushes; very dark, with little breaks in the sky: the friezes are very wide, and have a most beautiful effect, painted in this manner. All the walls are painted with ornaments of stone colour to fit the pictures; so that the pictures might seem to have been originally designed for their places. It contains a great number by different masters, but none very capital. There are some by Vandyke, very good, but slight; and more in the Flemish style than those we have in England. There are the beginnings of two heads painted in oil upon paper pasted on canvass, which have great thinness and freshness. There is a small Parmigiano with some parts very good. A Buonaroti, some of the heads very fine; the subject, Christ praying in the garden.

"The *Durazzo Palace,* Strada-Balbi, is reckoned the most beautiful, and I think it is the most pleasing and elegant I have seen, except Versailles. The entrance has a most enchanting effect in the contrivance, though the architecture is not pure. It has a very beautiful gallery, but small; all the rooms are rather small, but very rich; the ceilings and walls are painted in Fresco by the same master that painted the Balbi palace. In the room adjoining to the gallery is a very capital picture* by Paul Veronese, of Mary Magdalene

* Sir Joshua makes the following observations on this picture, which, though less in detail, shew that he and Mr. Romney coincided in opinion. "But the picture which should be first mentioned is very large, and the most capital one I have seen by Paul Veronese, of Mary

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washing the feet of Christ. It is in excellent preservation, and has the freshness of one painted but a year. The surface is dry without any gloss, like a Distemper painting; so that, though it hangs facing the light, it may be seen to great advantage. There is a fluency in the touch that will convince every artist who examines it, that it was not painted with oil, but with some very thin limpid vehicle; nor in distemper, I believe, as the colours are better united in some parts of the picture than that will admit of. There is a very rugged kind of touch in the hair and other parts, as if it had been painted with simple water. There are some parts where it is broken a little, and looks dry and crumbly.

"The—— *palace* is very rich and elegant, and painted much in the same manner as the others. There are several pictures, and some good ones, in it; one in particular, The Assumption of the Virgin, by Corregio, or Parmigiano. It is a very small picture, but a most beautiful composition. The figure of the virgin is suspended in the clouds in a very becoming posture, with her arms extended; and looking up, with a very sweet countenance, but not very beautiful. She is surrounded by a group of angels and children, hand in hand; some of the angels are in the most graceful actions imaginable, and the forms of their limbs and heads are perfectly angelic: the beauty of the features, the angelic sweetness of the countenances, and the elegant disposition of the hair, make them divine beyond conception or imitation. There are two whole lengths by Vandyke, a gentleman and lady; the gentleman is on horseback in a very spirited action; the lady's picture is very slight, but charmingly coloured; it has a transparency throughout, and a glow in the face, that I have never seen before in Vandyke; the attitude is very

Magdalene washing the feet of Christ, containing about ten figures as large as life, admirably finished."

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simple, but very graceful and genteel. There are two beginnings of them in oil colour, upon paper pasted on canvass; they are very thin and transparent, and seem to be painted with nothing but vermilion, brown ochre, white, and black. There are some other pictures by Vandyke, and a very good one by Rubens, a Bacchanalian piece. This palace has a Mezzanine story, that is, a story below the grand one, about eight feet high; it is very beautifully fitted up, and has a retired, cool, and pleasing effect. Observe, the principal story is generally the third, fourth, or fifth.

"The—— *palace* has nothing remarkable but a small gallery, which is the most complete piece of elegance I ever saw; it has two doors of looking-glass at each end, covered with light gold ornaments, in the most beautiful taste; the carving of the looking-glass frames, the sconces, the table frames, the chairs, and the ceiling are in the finest taste imaginable, and gilded. The floor is composed of various sorts of the finest marble; the ceiling is painted; and there are two circular pictures at each end, over the doors, but they are very indifferent. The Duke of York intended to have built a room in the same taste, had he lived. In the room adjoining there is a very fine head by Raphael, a Judith with the head of Holofernes. The face is beautiful and grand; there is great spirit and strength in the eye, and the mouth is grave, but very sweet. It is a very good tone of colour, is highly finished, and in excellent preservation.

"The *palace Doria* has been beautiful, but is now out of repair; as the prince to whom it belongs resides at Rome. The front and the ceilings were painted by Perino del Vago; they are in the gusto of Raphael's school, but inferior to Romano and Polidore: the ceiling of the grand saloon represents the fall of the giants, and has great

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merit. Most of the other ceilings are divided into small compartments, and some of them are very sweet compositions. The ornaments are in very good taste. This palace is situated on the north-west side of the harbour, and affords a most delightful prospect of the town and harbour. In the church of the Jesuits (St. Ambrogio) which is near the Doge's palace, there is a very fine picture of the Assumption of the Virgin, by Guido, and two pretty good ones by Rubens, on the same subject. There are many churches, and they are in general very rich, and some of them beautiful. The church St. Maria di Carignano is situated on a hill east of the town; it is constructed after the model of St. Peters at Rome; the architecture in the inside is very well. The situation is charming; from the dome you see the outer wall of the town, which runs upon the ridge of the high hill behind the town, from whence there is a steep declivity, which seems to render it inaccessible. You have also a very good view of the town, which lies below you; it is of a triangular form, but the side next the harbour is curved. There are a great number of houses scattered on all sides, all beautifully situated, and in general very elegant. From the church, likewise, we saw three mortars lying near the precipice at the sea shore, on the south east side of the town, where the skirmish began when the Genoese drove the Germans out of the town, and recovered their liberty in 1756.

"The Genoese women are in general elegant in their figure, have great ease in their action, and walk extremely well. They are of a good size, are fair, but very pale, which is occasioned by the dress they wear. It is a loose robe of calico or thick muslin, which goes over their heads like a veil, and over their shoulders and arms like a capuchin. They let it fall over the forehead as low as the eye brows, and twist it under the chin; they generally have one hand

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up almost to the chin, holding the veil with their fingers beautifully disposed among the folds, and the other across the breast. They are short-waisted, and have very long trains, which produce the most elegant flowing lines imaginable; so that with the beautiful folds of the veil or cloak, they are, when they move, the finest figures that can be conceived. When the veil is off, you see the most picturesque and elegant hair; it is braided up the back of the head and twisted round several times and beautifully varied; it is pinned with a long silver pin: where it is not braided, it is flat to the head with some loose hair round the face."

From Genoa they proceeded by sea to Leghorn, in which voyage they encountered a tremendous storm; the danger of which was considerably increased by the ill-timed superstition of the Italian sailors, who, instead of exerting themselves manfully in navigating the vessel, sought safety in prayers to their saints. The circumstances of their escape I do not remember, but I should presume that it was not through the instrumentality of saints; probably the Italians were roused to exertion by the exhortations and remonstrances of their fellow-voyagers, whose efforts under divine providence, were, at length, crowned with success. From Leghorn the adventurous travellers took the route by Pisa and Florence; from which latter city, after having taken a hasty view of the magnificent works of art which it contains, they proceeded directly to Rome, where they arrived on the 18th of June.

No sooner was Mr. Romney settled in this illustrious city, than he commenced his studies with the most enthusiastic ardour; and, in order to make the most of his limited time, to be quiet, and free from every kind of interruption, he in a great measure withdrew from soci-

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ety. Mr. Hayley, however, gives a different account of his motives. "Such (says he) was the cautious reserve of Romney, which his singular mental infirmity, a perpetual dread of enemies, inspired, that he avoided all further intercourse with his fellow-traveller, and with all the other artists of his country who were then studying at Rome." To impute injurious motives would have been uncandid in any biographer, but it is particularly ungracious in Mr. Hayley, the professed friend of Mr. Romney. The great Michael Angelo, who devoted himself in like manner to sequestered study, did not escape a similar imputation; but Vasari his more faithful biographer, after showing how groundless such charges were, makes that, which was intended as a reproach, redound to his honour. "Ne paja nuovo a nessuno, che Michelagnolo si dilettasse della solitudine, come quelli, che era innamorato dell' arte sua, che vuol l'uomo per se solo, e cogitativo: e perche e necessario, che chi vuole attendere agli studi di quella, fugga le compagnie; avvengache chi attende alle considerazioni dell' arte, non e mai solo, ne senza pensieri: e coloro, che gliele attribuivano a fantasticheria, et a stranezza, hanno il torto; perche chi vuole operar bene, bisogna allontanarsi da tutte le cure, e fastidj, perche la virtu vuol pensamento, solitudine, e comodita, e non errare con la mente." It has been said, that the virus of the adder's bite may be counteracted by the application of its own grease: I shall pursue a similar course, and apply the following just observation by Mr. Hayley as an antidote to his own uncandid and illiberal reflection. "Men, who withdraw themselves from the ordinary forms of society, whether delicacy of health, or a passion for study, or both united, occasion their retirement from the world, are generally obliged to pay a heavy tax for the privacy they enjoy, in having their habits of life, and their temper, very darkly misrepresented by the ignorant malice of offended pride."

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Mr. Romney, however, did not altogether relinquish society; he occasionally associated with some individuals of like habits and disposition, and it was at Rome that he first became acquainted with Wright of Derby, Harrison the architect, and Marchant the sculptor in gems; all men highly distinguished for professional talent, and private worth. It is very probable that he might have disliked the intrusion of pryers, and the company of idlers; but I never at any time noticed that peculiar dread of enemies which Mr. Hayley imputes to him. He had penetration enough to distinguish who were friendly to him, and who were not, and of course was shy towards the latter; this was natural. I am disposed also to admit, though I do not know that it was the fact, that he might have felt some dread of the friends of Sir Joshua when they came about him; knowing well, that they were so attached to his rival from personal motives, that he had little chance of candour from them. I shall just mention one circumstance, which I think would justify him in entertaining such feelings. Sir Abraham Hume came in 1783 to sit for a three-quarters portrait, the price at that time was only twenty guineas. Mr. Romney exerted himself, and produced a portrait accurate in likeness, and in every respect equal to the works of Reynolds; if it had any fault, it was, perhaps, that of being *too good.* It however, was never claimed. After Mr. Romney's death, Sir John Leicester offered ten guineas for it, which I declined, and then gave it to Mr. Wilson, of Dallam Tower, Sir Abraham's friend. It is very extraordinary that Sir Abraham, who has the character of being an amateur, a connoisseur, and a *patron* of art, could have been capable of such conduct. This however is the fact; and this was done by Sir Joshua's particular friend.

A coolness did certainly take place between him and Humphry soon after their arrival at Rome, which was owing to some captious-

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ness on the part of the latter; it does not, however, appear to have been of long duration. Humphry was undoubtedly a gossip and an idler, which was not the case with Mr. Romney, who might probably wish to study when the former wanted to talk.

During his residence in Rome, comprising a period of a year and seven months, little is known respecting him: in a life devoted to study, each day is so like the preceding, that one might almost say, as far as related to Mr. Romney's habits, *una dies totam continet vitam.* But although he himself is, as it were, invisible, we can trace him by his works; and though many of them have undoubtedly perished, having served the temporary purpose of improvement, still there remains sufficient to shew his indefatigable industry. His studies after the antique and the old masters are numerous; and it does not appear that he omitted to exercise his own invention. He has not, however, produced so many pictures while he was at Rome, as one might reasonably have expected from his habits and application. I have three heads which he painted there from models taken from the streets. One is that of *Baiocco,* a most savage looking dwarf, well known to the English who visited Rome at that day, and so called by them from his begging for a small Roman coin of that name. Another, is that of an *Assassin,* one of those vile wretches who were to be hired by any body, to avenge injuries, which the law under that feeble government could not reach. It has a handsome, but fierce looking countenance; the hair is black, that of the head short and curled, and the beard frizled. It would have been a fine study for a *Brutus.* The third is a very fine head of *An old Jew.* It is exquisitely painted and with much delicacy of touch; the aspect is mild, but penetrating and dignified. The head is bald, and the locks and beard grey. He painted another head from this model for the character of Moses,

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which was sold in an unfinished state at the auction of his pictures. The head which I have is much superior.

There was at that time in Rome a young female of fine form, who lent herself to the artists for hire as a naked model, and by these means supported herself and her mother. Notwithstanding this species of prostitution, it does not appear that her mind was actually corrupt. Her mother always attended her, so that she was never left alone; and as much delicacy and decorum were observed as the nature of the business would admit of. Had the slightest liberty been attempted, it would have been repelled with indignation; so, at least, it was generally understood. Mr. Romney availed himself of so favourable an opportunity for studying the *nude*, and made many sketches from her; he thus acquired an accurate knowledge of the female form in all its diversities of attitude. I believe he painted only one picture from her: it represents a naked female in the character of a *Wood-Nymph*, reposing at full length upon the ground, with her back turned towards the spectator. The fore part of her body is raised and resting upon her right arm and elbow, and she is contemplating the reflection of her beautiful face in a brook. She lies upon drapery of white linen and a pink robe, which gives a rich warmth and harmony of colouring to the whole. The back ground is a wild forest. This picture came into the possession of Mr. Keate, the surgeon, for an inadequate price. Mr. Romney began a half-length portrait of Mrs. Keate, and received payment for it, forty guineas; but the portrait, from some cause or other, was never finished, and Mr. Keate requested this picture in its stead. The Wood-Nymph was, in my estimation, cheap at two hundred guineas; but it was not the fashion in those days to buy fancy-pictures.

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There was another picture which he painted while at Rome, and which I ought to mention, though, I must confess, I regard it rather as an object of censure than of praise. It is very natural, however, to be misled by the influence of great examples: both Michael Angelo and Raffaelle have represented the *Almighty* with the figure and character of human nature; a practice too much countenanced by the corruptions and idolatry of the Roman catholic religion; for surely it is a profanation of the grossest character, to exhibit by a degrading representation, the invisible Creator of all things; whose very name should not be uttered without feelings of veneration and awe, and who, when Moses and Elijah were summoned to his presence on mount Horeb, only revealed himself to them by the effects of his power—by storms, by earthquakes, and by flames of fire. There is indeed another passage in Scripture, that would seem to favour the idea that the Almighty had a circumscribed form: "*and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool.*"—Daniel, vii. 9. Ancient of days does not denote old age, for that implies decay, but that He existed from the beginning. This language is altogether figurative, and does not convey any precise idea of form; how indeed could a Being, who says; "*the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*"—be circumscribed by the contour of a man's form? Yet, undoubtedly, the prophets, in order to accommodate their language to the capacity of the human understanding, are sometimes obliged to make use of terms, when speaking of the Deity, which, to a certain degree, are expressive of form. The following passage, however, is, I think, conclusive as to the impropriety, (not to say impiety,) of representing the Almighty under any form whatever, even though not intended for the purpose of idolatry.—"Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord

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spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure."—The picture I have alluded to, was *Providence brooding over chaos.* It represented a venerable old man borne upon the clouds. He fronted the spectator and had his arms outspread; his hair was parted on his forehead, and his beard flowing. There was a mild expression in his countenance, and he seemed rapt in the performance of some great operation. The lower part of the picture exhibited a chaotic mass of obscurity and darkness. This picture remained in his gallery in Cavendish square for some years. It was placed over the copy of the Transfiguration, opposite to the entrance. At the time of Lord George Gordon's riots in 1780, it excited great alarm in the mind of Mr. Romney, lest it should attract the notice of the rioters and be regarded as an object of Roman catholic idolatry, and thus lead to the destruction of his house. It was therefore immediately removed to a back apartment. When I made out the catalogue for the sale of his pictures, I called it *Jupiter Pluvius;* borrowing the idea from a representation of that Pagan divinity on the column of Marcus Aurelius, to which the figure in Mr. Romney's picture bore some resemblance.

He studied the works of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle with ardent devotion, and made himself familiar with the excellencies of each. In the first he sought grandeur and dignity; in the latter, grace and expression. All those grand figures of sibyls and prophets, which decorate the Cappella Sistina, he has transferred to his sketch books; as well as many other designs by that gigantic master. But from the works of Raffaelle, who combined more of the excellencies of the art than any other painter of modern times, he made several copies in oil. He had scaffolds erected in the Vatican, which became to

HOPE PORTRAIT COLLN. OXFORD.
OXFORD MUSEUM
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him, as it were, a school; and thus he was enabled to copy those parts which pleased him the most, or which, from some peculiarity, were best suited to afford him instruction. I have a copy in oil of the powerfully expressive head of *Heliodorus*, and of two other heads from the same picture. The head and part of the body of the female carrying the buckets of water, in the *Incendio di Borgo;* and also, a pencil drawing of the whole figure. As a single figure, I look upon this as one of the finest productions of the pencil; it is truly *Homeric**. It is said that Raffaele derived his greatness of manner from studying the works of Michael Angelo; be it so; but he improved upon his model by adding grace to grandeur. Michael Angelo should be studied rather than imitated; the *fierte* of his overcharged style should be tempered by other milder characteristics of art. It was thus that Raffaelle did when he saw his works in the Capella Sistina; which is sufficiently manifest even from the figure of which I am now speaking. The grandeur of outline—the dignity and grace in the attitude and action—the expression in a side face of a mind under strong emotion—and the undulating flow of the drapery as agitated by the wind, and so clinging to the body, as to display the beauty of form with almost as much precision as is seen in a Grecian statue—render it one of the noblest subjects in all art for the study of a young painter. From the same picture I have also a small copy in oil and umber on a cartoon, of the man bearing his infirm and aged father upon his shoulders from the danger of the conflagration; and accompanied by a youth, supposed to be his son. This idea, as every one knows, was borrowed from Virgil; who gives a similar representation of Æneas carrying his father Anchises, and conducting his son Ascanius from the flames of Troy. Different persons have thought that

* "Homerum secutus, cui validissima quæque forma etiam in fœminis placet.—Quintilian Ins. de Orat." Lib. 12, c. 10

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they perceived a similarity between the poet and the painter*, which probably may have been first suggested by this imitation. I believe,

* Raffaelle himself seems to have had some consciousness of this resemblance, as he has placed his own figure near that of Virgil in his *Mount Parnassus.*

"I could not help frequently observing the many similar traces in the character of Raffaelle, and in that of Virgil. Both were blessed with great natural talents; in the improvement and perfection of which, both proceeded on the same sure and solid foundation, of the greatest industry. Both aimed at the utmost correctness, as well as spirit in their works. Both gave their attention with all possible diligence to the study of the works of the great men who had preceded them."—Wilcocks' Roman Conversations.

"Th' enchanting painter rules the willing heart,
And shines the finished Virgil of his art."

Hayley's Epistle on Painting.

" Les ouvrages de Raphael frappent peu au premier coup d'œil: il imite si bien la nature, que l'on n'en est d'abord pas plus etonne que si l'on voyoit l'objet meme, lequel ne causeroit point de surprise; mais une expression extraordinaire, un coloris plus fort, une attitude bizarre, d'un Peintre moins bon, nous saisit du premier coup d'œil, parce qu'on n'a pas coutume de la voir ailleurs. On peut comparer Raphael a Virgile, et les Peintres de Venise, avec leurs attitudes forcees, a Lucain. Virgile plus naturel frappe d'abord moins, pour frapper ensuite plus: Lucain frappe d'abord plus, pour frapper ensuit moins."—Montesquieu Essai sur le Gout.

These observations of Montesquieu respecting the first impressions on seeing the pictures of Raffaelle, confirm, and receive confirmation from those of Reynolds.

" It has frequently happened, as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican, that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raffaelle, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved; so little impression had those performances made on them. One of the first painters now in France told me, that this circumstance happened to himself, though he now looks on Raffaelle with that veneration, which he deserves from all painters and lovers of art. I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raffaelle had the same effect on him * * *. This was a great relief to my mind * * *. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world."—Observations by Reynolds in Malone's account of him.

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however, that it will be admitted, that the purity, grace, and dignity, which embellish the language of the one, will be found no less conspicuous in the style of the other; and that the truth of character and powerful expression, which distinguish the figures of the painter, will likewise be found to characterize the personages of the poet; and as Virgil sought simplicity and grandeur in Hesiod and Homer, so Raffaelle acquired these qualities by studying the works of those distinguished Florentine painters, Cimabue, Masaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michael Angelo.

Mr. Romney also painted in oil colours, a copy of the head of *Sappho* from the *Mount Parnassus;* and another of that group of figures in *The school of Athens,* which represents Archimedes explaining a diagram to his youthful pupils. The value of this copy* is enhanced by its containing the portrait of *Bramante* the architect, in the person of Archimedes.

But the work which cost him the greatest labour, and was the last and most important of his studies, was a copy of the *Transfiguration,* upon a scale of magnitude equal to the original. It was painted in oil and umber upon single sheets of paper, which he afterwards united upon one large canvass. The whole formed a most accurate and spirited copy of that last work, and master-piece of Raffaelle; the finest picture, perhaps, in the world; in which all the excellencies of that great master were combined, and which alone was a sufficient school to form a young painter. It was not literally a copy of the whole picture, but of the lower, and most attractive part; which represents a youth tormented with an evil spirit, surrounded by a group of sympathizing and terrified spectators; partly consisting of the dis-

* This picture was purchased by Henry Ainslie M.D. when sold in the auction.

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ciples of Christ, and partly of the relations and friends, male and female, of the demoniac. To accomplish this work he had a scaffold erected in the church di San Pietro in Montorio, where this picture was the altar-piece. And while he was employed in this laborious undertaking, the monks, at their stated periods of worship, used to come and prostrate themselves at the altar immediately under him, without interrupting him in any respect, or being themselves interrupted. If any place, from association of ideas, was capable of inspiring enthusiasm and of giving energy to the exertions of an artist, surely it was this. Here the *religio loci* must have had a most powerful influence on the mind. In the presence of this noble picture, on the very spot where the sad remains of its illustrious author had lain in solemn funeral pomp*, surrounded by all the dignity and talents of that splendid and enlightened age—an age, in which genius was honoured and extolled almost to veneration—it was impossible that Mr. Romney, with his warm and enthusiastic spirit, should not have felt these inspiring impressions while he was painting there.—But what was the recompence of his labours? He was offered one hundred guineas for the copy on its arrival in England, by the then Duke of Richmond; but he, conscious of the labour and expense which it had cost him, and sensible of its merits, unfortunately declined the offer. Little did he foresee the ignominious fate that befel it. Can it be believed that this copy sold for only six guineas at the auction of his pictures!!!

When the pictures of Sir James Thornhill were sold after his death, his copies of the cartoons of Raffaelle were sold for only two hundred

* "The chefs d'œuvre of art cause a peculiarly solemn impression in the temple where the remains of the artist are consigned to repose."—Germany, by Baroness Stael Holstein, end of vol. 2.

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pounds; a price (says Walpole) we ought in justice to suppose was owing to the few bidders who had spaces in their houses large enough to receive them. Yet how much better were they sold than Mr. Romney's copy of the Transfiguration! A picture whose size was not liable to the same objection, and which was in fact almost unique; there being only two other copies in this kingdom, one in Dulwich chapel, said to be by Guilio Romano, and the other at Winnstay, by Parry. The original was also, at that time, in the Napoleon Museum at Paris, and inaccessible to British subjects. Indeed, the whole of Mr. Romney's pictures, with the exception of two or three, sold ill at that sale. The best bidders were among the artists, Sir John Leicester only excepted, who showed his judgment and taste in buying that exquisite picture of fancy, *Titania Puck and the Changeling;* for which, though in an unfinished state, he gave one hundred guineas. The sudden dissolution of parliament, which took place the preceding day, had, no doubt, a very disadvantageous effect; but the postponement of the sale by Christie after it had been advertised, was still more injurious: to these two causes, therefore, I would willingly attribute the want of bidders for the copy of the Transfiguration. Even the Royal Academy should not have lost so favourable an opportunity of purchasing such a work; but, perhaps, they might have thought that any thing from the pencil of Mr. Romney would have been misplaced in their Academy: if, however, they had considered him as hostile to their establishment, (which he never was,) they might still have remembered the old adage:—*fas est ab hoste doceri.*

My humble opinion is, that historical painting can never flourish in this country so long as it chiefly depends upon individual patronage; or is made subservient to the views of commercial speculators.

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The minds of the higher orders are too much engrossed by party politics, to allow them leisure to promote and cultivate the arts of design. Besides, it is a very uncommon union of qualities and circumstances, which constitutes a true patron; to munificence and a princely fortune should be superadded those rare mental endowments which distinguish a great painter—taste, genius, and enthusiasm. Such characters, even under the most favourable circumstances of civil society, seldom occur; they are *rari nantes in gurgite vasto.* To obviate the want of private patrons, a permanent national establishment should be formed; the object of which should be, to honour and reward the artists, and to improve the national taste. The British Institution is good as far as it goes, and does great honour to those by whom it was projected and established; but its funds are not sufficiently ample, to answer all the purposes of an enlarged and effectual patronage. Ten or fifteen thousand pounds a year should be set apart by government for the promotion of this grand object; and a committee, selected from the governors of the British Institution, should be appointed for the disposal of this sum. An insulated building should be erected in a central part of the metropolis, capable of extension when necessary, for the reception of pictures and statues. It should be called the *National Gallery**, to which the public should have free access at stated times, and in limited numbers, as at the British Museum. It would not be necessary that this sum should be expended each year, but sometimes more, and sometimes less, according as there might happen to be pictures and statues produced, entitled to such distinction; especially in the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and of the British Institution. By these means this great national object might, perhaps, be attained; and Britain become as illustrious by her skill in arts, as she is now renowned for her feats in

* This was written long before the establishment of the present National Gallery.

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arms; and thus transmit to posterity a name as glorious as that which was acquired by Athens in the days of Pericles. After an artist had enriched the National Gallery with a certain number of pictures or statues, thus purchased, he ought to be entitled to a pension out of the fund: and if he should double that number, he might then have the privilege of claiming the title of Knight; for honour has a more powerful influence upon great and noble minds than the lust of lucre. Hitherto there has always been a backwardness on the part of government to encourage the arts; partly owing to a want of taste and proper feeling in those who were in power, and partly from their not having duly appreciated their national importance; not reflecting, that the excellence of some of our manufactures is owing in a great measure to their connection with the arts of design; and that every valuable picture, painted in this country, is so much property added to the stock of national wealth.

That Mr. Romney had occasionally varied his studies while at Rome, is evident from his drawing-books; for in them are several sketches of St. Peter's church, of parts of the Colosseo, and of picturesque scenery in the neighbourhood of that city. It may be inferred, also, from the same authority, that he had extended his excursions as far as Tivoli; for he has left sketches of the Sibyl's Temple, of the Grotto of Neptune, and of the Cascatelli, near that picturesque place.

Thus glided away his time in incessant, but varied study; and there is every reason to believe that, while he was at Rome, he passed some of the pleasantest hours of his life. Nothing occurred to disturb their tranquil and quiet course, except one single momentary circumstance; which, however, might have brought them to a fatal

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termination. It happened that he occupied apartments in the Jesuit's College* at the time when Ganganelli was taking measures for the suppression of that obnoxious society. The college was in consequence surrounded by a military guard, and all egress prohibited. Mr. Romney, not understanding the Italian language, and living in habits of sequestered study, was not aware of what was passing around him: having, however, occasion one day to pass the gates, he was cautioned by the sentinel not to proceed; but not knowing the purport of the words, and being absorbed in his own reflections, he disregarded the warning, and still went on: when the guard instantly levelled his musket. This powerful argument roused him from his reverie, and he, with great presence of mind, said promptly—*Anglese*—this mystic word operated like a charm, and saved his life. This event, when Mr. Romney became acquainted with all the circumstances of it, made a deep impression upon his mind, and he had great pleasure afterwards in speaking of it.

A short time before he left the Roman capital, he received the following letter from Mr. Cumberland.

Warwick Castle, 14th August, 1774.

"Dear Romney,

"I hope this letter will reach you before you quit Rome, and convey to you my grateful acknowledgments for your obliging favour, which came to hand yesterday, and found me in this delightful castle, where I have been some time on a visit to Lord Warwick with my

* "I went to the Jesuite's Colledge again, the front whereoff gives place to few for its architecture, most of its ornaments being of rich marble. It has within a noble portico and court sustained by statèly colums, as in the corridor over the portico, at the sides of which are the scholes for the arts and sciences."—Evelyn's Diary, p. 190.

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wife, daughters, and eldest son. It gives me true satisfaction to hear that you have passed your time in Italy so much to your wishes; your country is much interested in your success, and amongst your friends no one more faithfully than I am. I have been very inquisitive from every quarter where I thought I could approach you, and I have always heard what gratified my ambition in your behalf; still I wanted the confirmation of your own testimony, and this being had, leaves me completely happy. The art has stirred very little since you left us; this year exhibited no advances in taste and execution. Barry fell into the false sublime and became ridiculous; West was in the wane, and our friend Sir Joshua, though very voluminous, had nothing supremely capital, coarse and flaring in his style and colours, he seems tired with nature and is bringing in vagaries to hide his want of improvement.—How unlike to the god-like simplicity of the ancients before your eyes, and their copyists the modern antiques, the heroes of the sixteenth century. Dance painted a single figure of Orpheus—mulcentem tigres—and did well in point of truth, but was vulgar; he carried the palm, however from his contemporaries: the picture now hangs in the music room of Sir Watkins Williams, companioning a St. Cœcilia of Sir Joshua. Rely upon me when I assure you, you are not forgot, on the contrary your fame rises, as the expectations of your country increase, and we shall demand great things from you on your return. The designs of M. Angelo with the colouring of Titian will have been your study, and the fruits of it will build you both fame and fortune. When I received your letter I was in the midst of your friends, and am charged by Lord Warwick to assure you of his cordial wishes. Mr. Greville is now writing to you and inclosing a letter to Sir W. Hamilton to prepare you a reception equal to your merits when you arrive at Naples. What shall I say to you in return for the Head of Sappho? Did you paint without

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genius, still the friendship with which you bestow would recommend your works to me; and did you give without friendship, still your genius would stamp a value on the present; when both unite I am highly flattered and delighted with this fresh testimony of your remembrance of me, and shall keep it with those performances of yours which are for ever in my eye and increase in value every day. I have got back my wife's picture with the boy out of Ireland, and prize it inestimably.—I must now say a few words to you from the amiable lord of this mansion; he has a few wishes about pictures, which perhaps you could gratify. There is a magnificent room in this castle, where a picture of consideration is wanting according to the proportion of sixty three inches by forty three wide, or near upon, (not to be nice to a few inches;) the subject historical, where more than one figure is employed. Lord Warwick knows too much of Italy and pictures, not to know how difficult it is to fall in with such a purchase upon reasonable terms; for he does not mean to dedicate a great sum to the purpose, but rather wishes to have a picture of effect and genius, which, perhaps may cross you in your travels out of the beat of our collectors, and not exceeding one hundred pounds sterling.—He likewise intreats the favour of you, if it falls in your way, to buy him a few portraits for a collection he is making; they must be heads only (which we call three-quarters) of spirit and effect; Titian or Guido, if they can be met with in compass of moderation; marked characters, or dignified persons; and your kind compliance with this request will gratify him most highly.—He likewise says, that if you bring home any copies, which you mean to dispose of, or if it falls in the way of your studies to make any copies from capital pictures, which you will part from at your return, he begs he may be considered in the first place; and any drafts you may make on him in St. James's square for purchases he will duly honour.—Having said this

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I am to assure you of his sincere regards and good wishes, and how glad he shall be to see you here at your return. Accept my best love and that of my good woman and all my young ones, who, I bless God, are perfectly well.—Bear me in remembrance and write again in answer to this.

"I am ever most affectionately yours,

"RICHD. CUMBERLAND."

After having resided at Rome nearly a year and seven months in the diligent cultivation of his art, he left that consecrated sanctuary of the Muses on the 10th of January, 1775, on his return to his native country. At Florence he continued three weeks, where he received the two following letters from his fellow students, Humphry and Peters.

"Dear Romney.

"I am flattering myself that this morning you got safe to Florence after an agreeable journey.

"I made it my business to see Mr. Peters, in order to get him to furnish you with a letter or two for Parma, which he complied with most cheerfully, and I have accordingly forwarded them to you: they are wrote in English, and of course are addressed to people who speak a little of our own language, which will afford you no small consolation I believe.—I have been twice to call upon Mr. Jenkins for the name of the vessel your things are to go in to England; but have not had the good fortune to find him. I shall not fail to repeat my visits till I see him, and you shall hear from me immediately after, and may expect my letter to Mr. Strange at Venice, at the same time.—Since you left us, though but a few days, the aspect of politics

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in Rome is considerably changed. The king of Spain has caused to be declared to the C———ls in C———ve that he will not suffer any one of them to be elected Pope that will not promise to publish a bull to confirm the act of the late Pope in dissolving the Jesuits; and he says, besides, that he insists upon every cardinal subscribing an instrument to confirm it. This has occasioned such confusion at the Vatican that one or two of the cardinals are come out, and many others are expected; and it is now to the last degree doubtful when another Pope will be elected, if ever, because it is said many of the cardinals are determined to perish rather than submit to such an encroachment; and it is not impossible, or even improbable, but we may shortly see Rome surrounded by a Neapolitan army. This in the mean time, is likely to become such an impediment to my studies (the Capella Sistina being shut) that I have thoughts of passing some months in Venice much sooner than I intended, but of this nothing certain can be said at present.

"I shall be very glad to hear you are arrived safe in Florence, and that you find every thing there agreeable to your wishes.

"Being very sincerely

"Yours &c.,

"O. HUMPHRY."

Rome, January 13th, 1775.

"Dear Sir,

"I have given to Mr. Humphry two letters for Parma which he intends inclosing to you, and I hope you will find by their means two agreeable friends and acquaintance. I should be very happy on any occasion of doing you what little acceptable services may chance to be in my power, should ever such happen. I beg you will with

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the utmost freedom command me.—When you go to Bologna if you mean to stay there above two days, I would recommend you to a private house, where I and other English artists have lodged formerly; you eat with the family and may probably meet some merchants of our country at the same place; I have therefore on the other side, given you a line to the mistress of the house, as also one to Mr. Edwards at Venice, whom you will find a valuable acquaintance. When you go to Parma it will be necessary to stay a day or two at the inn till you look about you; I was lodged for that time at the *Gambara*, either that or the *Pavone* are good houses; but should you choose to live in a private house, my hair-dresser (whom I recommend to you) will find you one, and him you will find by sending any one to the Marchese Venturi's, to know where the man lives who dresses the Signore Marchese; this is the man, but I forget his name. And for dining, the best place to go to, is, *chez Monsieur Raymond traiteur Francois*, where you will find at a certain hour, a good ordinary and the best company; the dinner is very reasonable, not exceeding two or three Pauls; and be so good to make my compliments to him.

"Pray my compliments to Mrs. Vanini—I shall certainly see you at Parma the end of April, and always,

"Dear Sir,

"Your very humble and obedient Servant,

"Wm. Peters."

Rome, Saturday Night.

From Florence he went to Bologna, where he stopped nearly a fortnight, and while there was offered the presidentship of the Academy of painting in the Instituto, which honour, however, he thought proper to decline for many weighty and obvious reasons. From

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Bologna he pursued his journey by Ferrara to Venice, where he arrived on the 25th of February. The particulars of this journey, his feelings, and observations are detailed by himself in the three following letters, written while he was at Venice; and which I have transcribed from a hasty scribble in one of his sketch books. The first is addressed to the Hon. Charles Greville, in answer to one which he had received at Florence; the second to Mr. Carter, a fellow student at Rome; and the third to his friend Humphry.

Venice, February 29th, 1775.

"Sir,

"When I received your very obliging letter of the 10th of October, I was, as I thought, within a few days of leaving Rome; but as more than three months have elapsed, I will now trouble you with an account of what I have been doing. When I began to consider the uncertainty of getting those pictures to copy in Florence, and the danger to which my health would be exposed in passing through Italy in the depth of winter; but especially, when I began to reflect upon your advice, hinted in a former letter, not to hurry myself too fast through my studies, a consideration which had more weight with me than any other; I determined to continue in Rome some time longer. In order, therefore, to employ myself in the most advantageous manner, I got leave to make a cartoon from the Transfiguration of Raphael: I made it in umber and oil of the same size. I think I was particularly happy in my determination, as it is a work where all the excellencies of that master are united: there is a perfection in the finishing hardly to be met with, and it is designed with more gusto than any other of his oil paintings. In the second week of January I left Rome, and on my arrival at Florence, had the pleasure of receiving the two letters you honoured me with, addressed to

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Lord Cowper, and Sir Horace Mann. They shewed great readiness to serve me, but all to no purpose. The pictures I wished to copy, are not suffered to be taken down on any account; and, on examining them several times with a ladder, I did not think it worth while to erect scaffolds.—I met with great entertainment from the old masters, in particular, Cimabue and Masaccio; I admired the great simplicity and purity of the former, and the strength of character and expression of the latter. I was surprised to find several of their ideas familiar to me, till I recollected having seen the same thoughts in M. Angelo and Raphael, only managed with more science.

"I made inquiry if the Marquis Nicolini had parted with any of his collection, or if there was any likelihood of his doing so, and was informed from good authority that it was quite improbable. The report that he had parted with some was raised by a landscape-painter, who had purchased two pictures of the steward of the family, and reported that he had had them from the Marquis, in order to raise their value.

"I am exceedingly concerned that I have not hitherto had it in my power to make any purchase for Lord Warwick, or to procure such pieces as you wish to have. The Magdalene of Correggio rather sank in my opinion on a second view, and the owner had raised his price to two hundred sequins.—At Florence Mr. Zoffani has the first intelligence if there be any thing of value to be sold; sometime ago he made a purchase of four or five very good pictures, which are now in Lord Cowper's collection. I hoped for better success in my way to Venice, as I had the good fortune to travel in company with Mr. Udney, the consul there. He knew all the good collections on that road, and took me to see many that were to be disposed of at Bologna

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and Ferrara. We did not, however, meet with any that I thought worth bidding a price for, except a few which a friend of his had, and which he had engaged some time ago. There was a Head of a Country Girl with a basket of fruit, and a small Madonna and Child, both by Titian; a Lot and his two Daughters, half length, by Guercino; and a copy of the St. Margaret* of the convent of that name in Bologna, by Parmigiano: a duplicate also is in the Colonna palace at Rome. I mention these because they are the only things which I have seen that were to be disposed of, out of the dealers' hands, and for which I would pay duty.

"I found the works of the Caracci in the condition in which you have described them, very much damaged, or so very dark that they can scarcely be seen; however, I think there is a style of painting in them very much to be admired, particularly in Lodovico; his thoughts are more elevated than those of any other of that school, (though frequently borrowed from Titian or Correggio;) but he is less correct than his scholars; his forms are large and few, the tone of his colouring is grave and low; and there is a gloom in the effect of his pictures well adapted to the pathetic and terrible.—I admire the St. Agnes of Dominichino, and the Peter and Paul of Guido; but neither so much as the St. Cecilia of Raphael, and the St. Margaret of Parmigiano.

* The original was bought by the king of Poland for an immense sum. The Academician Ascoso says that the Caracci ran mad after this picture. "Si soddisfi pur pienamente l'intendimento pittorico nello più compita tavola che mai pignesse il graziosissimo Parmigianino, e alla quale andavano dietro pazzi i Carracci. Non si possono mai sperare più bell' arie di teste, più corrette mani, più maestosi panni, di quei che quì vestono la Beata Virgine col Figliuolo, la Santa Margherita, il S. Girolamo, il S. Petronio, e l' Angelo, che tiene la Croce della Santa, il di cui orribil Drago mette spavento."

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"I have been four days in Venice, and am at present almost lost to every thing in this world but Titian. I cannot acquaint you what I shall do, or how long I shall stay; but I think about a month, and expect to be in London the first or second week in May. As I shall pass through several towns in my way to Parma, where there are good pictures, I hope fortune will throw some into my hands.

"I am, Sir,

"Your much obliged humble servant,

"GEO. ROMNEY."

"P. S.—A letter will find me at Parma by directing it to be left at the Post Office; if you have an opportunity to write one, it will be thankfully received."

"Dear Carter,

"I am under great apprehensions lest you should be much displeased at my neglect in not writing to you, particularly, as I have written to Mr. Humphry and Mr. Peters. If you will have a little patience I will tell you the reason; but in the first place will give you some account of my feelings when I left Rome, and of my journey afterwards, as I think you have more sympathy than the rest of my fellow-students. Whether it was owing to the multitude of thoughts which continually crowded on my mind for some weeks before I left Rome, about the settling of plans, collecting various matters, both mental and substantial, paying of bills, &c.,—I say whether it was owing to these, and a thousand hopes and fears which agitated my mind; or to something else which I have not yet discovered, that had benummed my feelings; certain it is, that when I passed the Porta del Popolo, crossed the Ponte Mollé, and during the whole day following till I arrived at the Monte Rosi, I hardly felt regret. After

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a good night's rest, (the hurry of departing being over,) my affections began to revive, and something hung about my heart that felt like sorrow; which continued to increase till I reached the summit of Mount Viterbo. I arrived there about half an hour before the Vetturino, indeed I had hastened to do so, as well knowing it would be the last time I should see Rome. I looked with an eager eye to discover that divine place. It was enveloped in a bright vapour, as if the rays of Apollo shone there with greater lustre than at any other spot upon this terrestrial globe. My mind visited every place, and thought of every thing that had given it pleasure; and I continued some time in that state, with a thousand tender sensations* playing about my heart, till I was almost lost in sorrow—think, O think, my dear Carter, where you are, and do not let the sweets of that divine place escape from you; do not leave a stone unturned that is classical; do not leave a form unsought out that is beautiful; nor even a line of the great Michael Angelo.—It was not till I had passed thence, that I saw any thing that diverted my thoughts from Rome, when I observed the aspect of the country quite changed; and as form and appearance affect me, I was led to suppose that the character of a country might contribute a good deal towards forming the style and taste of men of genius; particularly so when the arts are in

* "As we rolled under the arch of the Porta del Populo, and heard the gates close behind us; as we passed the Ponte Milvio, and looked down on the Tiber flowing dimly beneath, our regrets redoubled, and all the magnificence of Rome, now left behind us for ever, presented itself once more to our recollection."—Eustace's Classical Tour, Vol. 2, p. 171.

"And walking on while they were changing the horses, ascended the hill, took a last view of Rome then glittering with the rays of the sun that played upon its palaces, towers and domes, and displayed its whole extent in all its magnificence."—P. 178.

"It is impossible to leave this city without emotion, so many claims has it to our attention; so many holds upon our best passions."—P. 148.

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their infancy, as the professors are led to seek principles in nature when they have no examples in art from whence to derive them; for all principles were originally drawn from nature. And I was going on to observe, as I thought, that Michael Angelo must have noticed that the long swelling line* about Florence gave much grandeur &c., —when I found I should be on a topic which would carry me far beyond the limits of this sheet of paper, and that I should not have room to give you my apology, and tell you what I have been doing. On my arrival at Florence I met with letters to Lord Cowper and Sir Horace Mann: they seemed very desirous to serve me, but it was out of their power; the Grand Duke will not suffer the Venus to be taken down, nor any picture in the Pitti palace; alleging, that if he suffer any one he cannot refuse others, which he had done lately to two or three who had applied through very great interest. In order to recompence myself, I got a ladder and examined them very near several times, and found more information than I expected. I was very much entertained, and I believe employed my time to greater advantage, in making sketches from the works of Cimabue, Masaccio, Andrea del Sarto, and Michael Angelo. At the end of three weeks I left Florence in company with Mr. Udney, and at Bologna was very well pleased with the school of Caracci. I think their style of painting grand, and that gravity of colour, and gloomy effect certainly well adapted to subjects of terror and pathos.

"I stayed there near a fortnight, some part of which time I was rather indisposed with a slow fever. I continued my journey with Mr. Udney, and arrived safe and well at Venice about a week ago, when it was high carnival. My extreme eagerness to see the works of Titian prevented my writing to you sooner. I will defer giving

* "Girt by her theatre of hills."—Childe Harold, canto 4th.

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you my opinion of him at present, as I am not quite settled in my thoughts respecting him. I beg you will communicate what you are doing, how the world goes, and what new things are come out. I have only just room to tell you in short, that from what I have seen, and what I have done, I have no reason to regret the disappointment at Florence. As to my apology, you see I have no space for it at present, I must, therefore, postpone it till another opportunity, relying upon your candour and clemency.

"Believe me, dear Carter,

"Your's sincerely,

"GEO. ROMNEY."

"Dear Sir,

"I am at length arrived at Venice safe and sound. I had the good fortune to meet with Mr. Udney at Florence, and as we intended to travel the same way, and happened to be ready at the same time, we agreed to go together. We left Florence the morning after I had the pleasure of receiving your second letter, and arrived at Bologna the next day in the evening. My first business, as you may suppose, was to look for the pictures which Sir Joshua has mentioned in his Discourses. I found them nearly such as he has described them. The St. Francis among his friars, and many others by Lodovico Caracci are so very dark, far from the eye, and in such bad lights, that it was with difficulty I could make out many of the figures; some of them were also much decayed; however I think there is much to be admired. There is a grandeur of character in the heads of his old men, and a dignity in the style of his figures in general, equal to most masters; and I think, if he could be come at and seen in good lights, some time might be spent to advantage in making studies. I also saw some clever things of Dominichino and Guercino, which

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raised my opinion of them. I think the great strength, breadth, and bold manner of working, which are peculiar to that school, are exceedingly well adapted to some kinds of historical painting. I need not say any thing of the St. Cecilia of Raphael. There is a St. Margaret by Parmigiano, which I think a very extraordinary picture. I met with very little in the Academy worth mentioning, except a room where there are five or six very fine anatomical figures in different actions, taken of in coloured wax; it is by much the finest school for studying in that I have seen. Upon the whole, I cannot think that there is any thing that will detain you a long time, except you sit down to copy the St. Cecilia, or the St. Margaret of Parmigiano.—Barry's picture surpassed my expectations."

"I have been three weeks at Venice, and have seen most of the works of Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese. I am sorry to find many of the first very dark, and much damaged; some of them have been extraordinary productions; but as there are many of them and parts of most in tolerable condition, there is enough to study from, perhaps not of the sort you and I might wish for—I mean women and children.—The Death of the Friar, and the St. Laurence have been amazingly fine pictures in invention, composition, character, expression, and colour. I have been hard at work some time past in making studies from a picture of Titian in the *Friary*. It represents a Madonna and Child, and St. Peter upon a flight of steps, and below, a group of portraits; it is in Titian's best manner, and, as it has been cleaned lately and is in good preservation, is in a favourable state to study from. Many of the heads are admirable in every respect as portraits; it hangs, however, in a much weaker light than the Transfiguration, and, what is still more mortifying, I could only work after mid-day, and was obliged to have every thing taken down

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and removed at night, which made it exceedingly inconvenient. There was one favourable circumstance, however, I could work as near as I pleased. I am now making a copy of a St. John the baptist by Titian, a middle aged figure standing, it is in good preservation and in a tolerable light; it is very finely coloured, but rather dirty. There is also a very early picture by Titian in the school of the Charetè; it is in good condition and advantageously placed for studying; it is one of the first things he painted after he came to Venice, and of course not in his best manner; however, notwithstanding, many parts of it are very well, and the manner of working is plainer to be seen than in any other of his pictures which I have met with. I mention these as being the only things I have yet seen that one can sit down to study from; his other works are either exceedingly dirty, damaged, or placed out of reach; excepting Judith, in one of the palaces, the only easel picture I have seen of value, though inferior to some things in the Borghese and Colonne palaces in Rome. However, upon the whole, I am very glad I did not make any studies from his works in Rome or Florence; being thoroughly convinced that a just idea of Titian can never be formed out of Venice. His great works are of a much higher order, and of a very different character from those in Rome. Even his damaged pictures, as far as examination goes, will be objects of study, having parts in good condition.

"Accept my best thanks for your third letter with one inclosed for Mr. Strange, which I received a few days after I arrived here. I shall always consider myself under great obligation to Mr. Udney for his kindness to me upon the road, and when I was indisposed a week at Bologna; also, after I arrived at Venice, for his great civility in inviting me to continue at his house, and in shewing the greatest

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readiness to procure me every thing I wished to copy.—Having every thing I could desire, and discovering something of a misunderstanding between him and Mr. Strange, I was prevented from delivering your obliging letter. Mr. Strange, however, has the character of being a very recluse man, so much so, that he has not yet received any of the foreign ministers, nor been out of his house since he came to Venice: and the etiquette of this place is such, that no nobleman will hold any intercourse with, or even speak to a foreign minister under such circumstances; his connexions, therefore, hitherto must be very limited. On the contrary, Mr. Udney is generally known, and much so among the nobility; and most of the pictures in churches belong to noble families. That in the Friary, from which I have been studying, is an instance; after his sending, I had liberty to copy what part I pleased, but not to interrupt the service of the church. However, if you have the least desire I should present your letter, I will wait upon Mr. Strange immediately after I hear from you. I mention these circumstances, partly as reasons for my not having delivered your letter, and partly that you may have some idea what steps to take when you come hither. I have endeavoured to give you a detail of every thing I can recollect; I shall be able to say more before I leave this place.

"I am glad you have received the letter you expected, and that the Pope has been elected, since this letter may find you in Rome. Be assured I shall always feel great pleasure when I can render you any service.

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Very gratefully, yours, &c.

"GEO. ROMNEY."

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During his stay at Venice he became acquainted with Edward Wortley Montague, the celebrated traveller, with whom he lived in habits of frequent intercourse. The corresponding simplicity of their modes of life and other peculiarities of character, had inspired them with mutual esteem. I remember that Mr. Romney, soon after his return from abroad, used sometimes to prepare his coffee according to instructions he had received from Wortley Montague.—The result of this intimacy was a portrait of the latter; painted by Mr. Romney with all that felicity of execution which might be expected from genius, when inspired by the voice of friendship. Montague, from his long residence in the east, had assimilated his habits to those of the Turks; and consequently, while at Venice, constantly wore the Turkish dress. This contributed to give a picturesque character to the portrait, which was a half-length. Mr. Romney brought it with him to England, and immediately sold it to the Earl of Warwick for fifty guineas, with a stipulation that he should be allowed to take a copy from it before it was sent to Warwick castle. The copy remained in his gallery many years, and was at length sold (in 1788) to Mr. John Milns, of Wakefield, for forty guineas. From this copy he also painted another in crayons of the head, with a view to ascertain how far he should be able to fix that fugitive manner of painting. This was a subject that had sometimes engaged his thoughts; for certainly if transpareney and durability could be added to the other characteristics of crayon-painting, a great object in art would be gained. The experiment succeeded nearly to his full expectation; for the glazing was applied without disturbing the crayons, which produced a clearness and brilliancy of colouring, hardly equalled in the finest Venetian pictures. The process, however, was, I believe, attended with so much difficulty, that he was not tempted to make any more experiments; or, at least, he had not sufficient leisure for

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such pursuits. Mr. Hayley erroneously calls this the original picture, which, he says, was presented by Mr. Romney to a friend. This friend was the mother of Thomas Hayley, who asked Mr. Romney for it; prompted, I have no doubt, by Mr. Hayley, who availed himself of every means to get possession of such pictures as he had set his mind upon. This of Montague was what I should call a *domesticated* picture; it hung in Mr. Romney's parlour at Hampstead, as a part of the decorations of his house. When I returned thither after a short absence, I perceived it missing; and of course inquired after it. Another little *domestic* picture had disappeared two or three years before, which, upon inquiry, I found Thomas Hayley had asked for. It was one of the most lovely things I ever saw; it was truly angelic. It represented a young female

> "*With* looks communing with the skies,
> *Her* rapt soul sitting in *her* eyes."

It was a sight sufficient to inspire the beholder with sentiments of religious sympathy—it was a visible illustration of piety—a sermon addressed to the eyes—it was equal to Guido in grace, and superior in expression.—Her long flowing hair floating loosely over her shoulders, her head encircled with a small blue fillet, and her soft blue eyes, all contributed to sanctify the character. The model for this Head was the daughter of Mr. Guy, the surgeon, of Chichester. It was left by Mr. Hayley's Will to one of his friends; but most of the pictures given to Mr. Hayley, were, after his decease, disgracefully consigned to the hammer.

While at Venice, he received the following communication from the Incorporated Society of Artists; it was addressed to him at Rome, and forwarded thence.

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London, February 10th, 1775.

"Sir,

"We the Committee of correspondence appointed by the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain, with pleasure inform you that the difficulties we have hitherto laboured under are happily at an end; that peace and harmony are perfectly restored among us.

"That the Society have made good their first payment with their creditors, at the close of the last exhibition; and by the most moderate estimate, find, they shall be able to discharge the whole arrears, by rents, and profit of the three succeeding exhibitions, when we shall make a saving of between six and seven hundred pounds per annum, and have the satisfaction of being possessed of the best exhibition room in the kingdom.

"There is the greatest unanimity and spirit in the society, all the principal members have voluntarily entered into an obligation for the support of the Society's credit; binding themselves in the penalty of one hundred pounds to exhibit to their utmost till the debts incurred by the building are discharged.

"Notwithstanding the absence of many of our valuable exhibitors, and the difficulties we then laboured under, we can with confidence affirm, we made a very respectable shew.

"The Society have entered into a resolution to purchase frames of different sizes, to accommodate those exhibitors who are unprovided.

"The exhibitions for the future will open on the 23d of April, and we are desired to request you will forward to us as soon as possible such of your works as you intend for exhibition.

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"Among many regulations for securing the peace and concord of the society, a law has passed that no president shall hold their Chair for two successive years, but may be elected the third.

"Peace being restored, our property secured, in the quiet possession of our estate, and having the addition of several valuable Fellows, viz., Messrs. Brompton, Tate, Sykes, &c., and with the assistance of your works, doubt not but we shall make a very capital exhibition, and you may depend on the greatest care and attention to arrange them to the best advantage.

"We are, Sir,

"Your very humble servants,

"JNO. MORTIMER.
S. GILPIN.
JOHN DIXON.
F. WHEATLEY.
JOHN SMART.
WM. MARLOW."

"Mr. Mortimer (at Miss Hurrel's, Norfolk Street, Strand) is president for this year; Mr. Tassaert (George Street, Hanover Square) Vice President; Mr Martin (Dean Street, Soho) Treasurer; Mr. Isaac Taylor (Holborn) Secretary.—What Pictures you consign for exhibition may be addressed to any of the Society's officers, of whom Mr. Tassaert is best acquainted with the Custom-house business."

It is almost needless to inform the reader, that a few years before, a part of the Incorporated Society had seceded in disgust, and founded the Royal Academy; which was at this time rising into celebrity under the auspices of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Incorporated Soci-

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ety, wishing to sustain their rivalry with this new establishment, did not overlook the advantage which they might have derived from such a member as Mr. Romney, as a counterpoise to Sir Joshua; and therefore, made this favourable representation of their circumstances, in order to induce him to exhibit with them. He, however, not wishing to involve himself in their contentions, but rather to steer clear of all parties, declined exhibiting altogether.

I do not exactly know how long he continued at Venice, but I should think, at least two months: he then proceeded to Parma.

Having already studied the principles of simplicity, grandeur, and expression in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and afterwards in those of the Bolognese; and having, also, now devoted a portion of his valuable time to investigate the mechanical processes of colouring as practised in the Venetian school, and especially in the works of Titian; not overlooking at the same time the other high qualities of this distinguished painter; nothing more remained, in order to complete the circle of his studies, but to impress upon his mind the graceful forms, and rosy beauties of Parmigiano and Correggio: and surely nothing could be of greater benefit to a painter of women and children, than to have a clear perception and feeling of that inexpressible grace and sweetness, which distinguish and characterize the airs and attitudes of the female figures and angels of these respective masters; and to acquire that *morbidezza* which is so remarkable in the colouring of Correggio. It does not, however, appear that he had made either copies or studies from their works; but it is manifest from his own productions, that he had not been an idle or inattentive observer of their characteristic excellencies.

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It was his intention at a later period of his life, to have painted a large picture in the *Correggiesque* style; but in consequence of the hasty completion of the Shakspeare Gallery, and of some other circumstances connected with that undertaking, which damped his enthusiasm; the idea was unfortunately laid aside. The choice of subject was happy, and well suited to his refined and poetic imagination. And had the rapid and dashing Sketch which he has made, been enlarged into a picture, and finished in his usual style of painting, it would have been one of the finest pictures in the world. No fancy-subject could be more finely conceived, and in the execution there is no doubt but it would have displayed all that playfulness and witchery of character, and that fantastic grace, which his fine taste, and exquisite feeling enabled him so well to communicate to his Fairy-figures. It was taken from the latter part of the first Act of the Tempest—which Play, The Midsummer Night's Dream, and Macbeth, were peculiar favourites of his, and over which his imagination frequently brooded with congenial enthusiasm and delight.

"MIRANDA—Beseech you Father!"

"PROSPERO—Hence; hang not on my garments, &c."

Including also Ariel's Song:

"Come unto these yellow sands, &c."

On the left of the picture are placed Prospero and Miranda. The former with his back rather turned to the spectator, and his face in profile. His right hand is elevated above his head, and his left just appears above his shoulder, which action of the hands evidently refers to his communication with Ariel. In his whole person there is an almost supernatural dignity and grandeur: and in his countenance, which is directed towards Ferdinand, is depicted a mild and placid gravity, combined with an assumed austerity. Miranda, with her breast and shoulders bare, hangs suppliant on her father's garments

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in the most bewitching attitude; with all that *souplesse gracieuse* which is more easily conceived than described. Her hair is loosely braided round her head, and in its redundance, hangs floating in the air. She gazes with admiration and tenderness on Ferdinand, who is placed somewhat to the right from the centre of the picture. He is seminude, by which his fine muscular form is seen to advantage, *os humerosque Deo similis;* and as he advances up the beach, is at that moment arrested by the rebuke of Prospero. It was Mr. Romney's intention to have exerted all his powers, both in colour and design, in the representation of this manly figure. To the right of Ferdinand and in the clouds, is Ariel with his subordinate agents, controlling the elements; while below, the agitated billows seem shrinking from their contact with the clouds. Beyond Ferdinand, and a little to the left, is a group of visionary females, as fantastic as fairies, and as graceful as angels, dancing upon the yellow sand, and seeming by their action, to check the waves as they break against the shore. When Mr. Romney had well studied a subject, and was perfectly master of every part of it, so that he saw it as distinctly with his mind's eye, as if it had been represented in a mirror; he had a happy facility of rapidly transferring it to the canvass while the impression was still strong on his imagination. He would make a sketch of this kind in oil colours, upon a half-length canvass, in less than an hour; in which the effect of light and shade, the harmony of colouring, the composition of the figures, and even the drawing and expression, to a certain degree, would be given at once, as it were by magic, in the most bold and dashing manner. If a sitter had disappointed him, he would sometimes take a waste canvass and accomplish one of these sketches before the next came. How much it is to be regretted, that this admirable design, on which so much thinking had been expended, should never have been embodied into a picture by his masterly hand!

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It is remarkable that he never made finished drawings for his pictures; he only designed the general idea and effect, and executed the minor parts when he painted the picture. He sometimes even painted directly from invention, but never with a copy placed before him. West, on the contrary, used to finish his drawings minutely; and his great pictures, being copied from them, lost much of their original freedom by the process of imitation; and thus acquired the appearance of magnified drawings: such at least, I remember, were the large scriptural subjects painted for St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

Mr. Romney did not prolong his stay at Parma beyond the short limit of two or three weeks; after which, he directed his course homewards with all convenient speed. At Turin, while he was in treaty with a vetturino to convey him to Lyons, he had the offer of a seat in a calash along with an Italian fencing-master and his wife, on the condition that he should pay a third of the expense. The terms were apparently so advantageous that he made no hesitation in accepting them. The Italian had formerly practised in Paris; but having visited his friends at his native place, and there formed a matrimonial connexion with a beautiful young woman, he was now again repairing to that gay city to resume his professional avocations, taking with him his spouse and portables; and to facilitate his journey, had bought a calash and two good horses. Mr. Romney, however, soon found that the conveyance was not so agreeable as he had been led to expect; for, besides other causes of annoyance, he was much incommoded by their superabundant luggage, especially in crossing the Alps. The fencing-master was a stout, fierce, bluff looking man, and treated his wife with much harshness. They quarreled on the way, and he taxed her with infidelity. She sang remarkably well, was amusing, and frequently entertained Mr.

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Romney with her songs; but, at length, became so mercenary that she would not sing unless he made her presents of chocolate. In descending the hills, the horses used to hurry down with such accelerated motion, as sometimes to make Mr. Romney apprehensive of serious consequences: upon one occasion especially, when peril seemed more obvious, he had the prudence and good fortune (which latter is generally the effect of the former) to dismount: the horses, urged by the pressure of the carriage, were soon in rapid movement, and, at last, the calash with its contents, was completely overturned. The Italian and his wife, more fortunate than prudent, though stunned and bruised by the accident, had no limbs broken. When Mr. Romney came up, he found him still lying on the ground, with an expression upon his naturally ferocious countenance, so piteous and woe-begone, that the union of opposite and almost inconsistent feelings, gave such a ludicrous and burlesque character to his face, that the artist could not resist the temptation of transferring it to his sketch book, while some country people were employed in refitting the vehicle, and replacing the luggage. As Mr. Romney's supply of cash was barely sufficient for his journey, he began to be afraid lest this disaster might be attended with greater expense than would comport with his limited means: the injury, however, was soon repaired, and they again proceeded on their way. At the inns upon the road, through defect of accommodations, they were often obliged to sleep in a double-bedded room; and *Signore Italiano*, rising early, frequently left his *Cara Sposa* in bed, unmindful of the indelicate situation in which Mr. Romney was placed; which, however, did not seem to occasion any embarrassment on the part of the lady: indeed she was always very familiar and easy in her deportment, addressing him upon all occasions as her *caro Signore Anglese*. When they arrived at Lyons, Mr. Romney, having had sufficient experience of his

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fellow-travellers, did not feel himself inclined to enter into any new agreement with them, although they had made overtures for that purpose; he, therefore, bid them *adeo*, and pursued his journey alone to Paris. On his arrival at that place, the contents of his purse were nearly expended, a circumstance in itself sufficient to create uneasiness; but when we consider, moreover, that he was ignorant of the French language, and without friends, we may then form a tolerable idea of the nature of his reflections and feelings; fortunately, however, he met with Mr. Peirse, of Yorkshire, whom he had known at Venice, who kindly accommodated him with money sufficient for the rest of his journey. He did not arrive in London till the 1st of July, though his passport is dated, Versailles, the 22nd of June.

He immediately placed himself in Gray's Inn; but I do not know of any pictures which he painted in the six months that intervened between his arrival in England, and his establishment in Cavendish Square: a few portraits of particular friends, some studies, and half-finished fancy-pieces probably constituted the whole of his performances, as he must have been quite unsettled during that time.

It was in this interval, and not many weeks after his return from abroad, that he received the following letter from Mr. Cumberland. The proposal contained in it does not appear to have been accepted; most likely for the reason just mentioned.

Tetworth, Wednesday.

"Dear Sir,

"I returned home the day before yesterday from Warwick Castle, where I had passed a few days with Lord Warwick, and in which time I took an opportunity of talking over with him at leisure all

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that you desired me relative to your disappointment in not executing his commission, and your readiness to have gratified him in it, if you had found any pieces of art worth bringing home.

"We had frequent discourses about you (the more especially as we were alone) and I had the happiness to find an elegant friend who went equal lengths with me in giving testimony to your genius and the hopes of your future fame, advanced by travel and experience. Lord Warwick is possessed (as no doubt you know) of a magnificent castle, and is disposing his furniture and pictures to the taste of the building. He has collected some very respectable portraits, chiefly of Vandyke, and has reserved a place in his principal apartment for a companion, where he wishes you to try your strength in the same bow with the best masters of portrait painting; but as he would not fetter your fancy to any fixt subject, he leaves the object to your own chusing and all circumstances about it, only it must be female, as I believe it is to companion with Charles the first's queen by Vandyke. It is his wish that you would work upon this picture at the castle, and he proposes to give you possession of an entire tower, where you will have choice of light, a most delightful workshop, bedroom, study, books, and closets for your tools, with all peace and content that solitude and serenity can give you. You will not doubt this plan being adapted to your disposition when I tell you it was the joint result of our councils, and we have laid the time as well as scene when Lord Warwick will be entirely alone, and when I can meet you, provided your business in town can spare you for a fortnight in the month of October, in the beginning of the month. My Lord and I propose going to Keswick for a short tour on the 10th of October, so that if you can meet me at Warwick on the 8th, we can leave you in possession of your tower, and at our return shall expect

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to find something in forwardness. This is our project, and if it meets your approbation and consent, let me know by letter and I will apprise my friend of it, and unless a call of parliament absolutely prevents our whole scheme, I think we shall have something capital from you, as I persuade myself you will be ravished by the scene, notwithstanding all you have so lately viewed. We take an artist with us to Keswick, so that we shall have something to shew you on our return. I have set my heart upon your approving this little plan of my amiable friend's, and am with true esteem,

"My dear Sir,

"Your sincere and faithful friend and servant,

"RICHD. CUMBERLAND."

The house in Cavendish Square, recently occupied by the late Francis Cotes, the crayon-painter, was still vacant. Its situation and accommodations rendered it a most desirable residence for a portrait-painter, and it did not escape the notice of Mr. Romney and his friends; but the risk of renting so large and expensive a house, with a precarious income, presented itself to his imagination in so formidable a light, that his friends by every argument, and much entreaty, could hardly prevail upon him to engage it: and no wonder, for a man of a less timid and cautious disposition, under the same circumstances, might with great reason have hesitated at so serious a speculation. His case was not that of a painter in full practice removing from one habitation to another; he was beginning, as it were, *de novo*, without the certainty of a single sitter: and had he continued for two or three months without employment, or had he been disabled by sickness for so long a time, his ruin was inevitable.—This was in fact the grand crisis of his life, on which depended all that is dear to man in this world—fame, fortune, and happiness.

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, &c.

OF

GEORGE ROMNEY.

PART THE THIRD.

AT this interesting period the third part of Mr. Romney's professional life may properly be said to commence, comprising an interval of about twenty years, in which all his principal pictures were painted. He took possession of his new abode at Christmas, and was ready to enter upon business with the new year (1776:) he soon, however, began to perceive that the apprehensions which he had entertained were not without foundation; for some weeks did certainly elapse before he met with any employment, and ruin was already beginning to stare him in the face, when, at length, the Duke of Richmond, not forgetful of the encouragement he had formerly given him, came to sit for his portrait. The picture was a three-quarters, and represented his Grace *en profile*, reading. It was universally admired, and he was in consequence commissioned to paint several copies for the Duke's particular friends. He painted, also, for his Grace, the portraits of Admiral Keppel, Mr. Burke, the Honourable

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Mrs. Damer, Lord George Lennox, Lord John Cavendish, &c., all of the same size.

The fruit of Mr. Cumberland's recent tour to the Lakes in company with the Earl of Warwick, was an Ode to the sun, which he published this year and dedicated to Mr. Romney. This was a well timed act of friendship, and does honour both to his heart and pen. As he has not republished the dedication in his own Memoirs, though certainly entitled to such distinction; I have taken the liberty to place it in the Appendix of this work, as being likely to afford entertainment to the reader of taste.

Mr. Orde (afterwards Lord Bolton) was a friend of Mr. Romney's, and frequently visited him about this time: he was an elegant scholar and a man of taste; and among his other accomplishments, was an able and emphatic reader. He used frequently to read to Mr. Romney such passages in the poets as he thought would afford good subjects for pictures. This gentleman, influenced by that grateful feeling and pious regard, which every liberal minded man must entertain for the place of his education, had intended to have presented to the Society of King's College, Cambridge, of which he himself had recently been a fellow, an Altar-piece for their admirable chapel, a structure in every part perfect except in the decorations of the Altar, which seemed to require some picture of a solemn but splendid effect: he was, however, unfortunately, anticipated by the Earl of Carlisle, who gave to the College an old picture, said to have been painted by Dan. da Volterra; which, although possessing considerable merit, is of too cold a hue for the solemn gloom of that beautiful chapel. The idea which Mr. Orde had suggested, was a *Mater Dolorosa,* or what the Italians call *Maria alla Croce.* The picture

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was in a state of great forwardness, but in consequence of this disappointment, it was never afterwards touched; and Mr. Romney lost both his hundred guineas and his time, which latter was to him at that period far the greater loss of the two.

In the beginning of the summer of this year (1776) he was seized with a severe disorder which had nearly proved fatal. Garrick had promised to sit to him for his portrait; a circumstance, however, which never took place, and which was, perhaps, prevented by this illness; but I think more likely by Garrick's attachment to Reynolds. On the 10th of June, when that great actor made his final appearance upon the stage, Mr. Romney, along with the multitude, was attracted to the doors of Drury Lane theatre; partly, like others, by simple curiosity; but more especially with a view to avail himself of that opportunity, in order to study with greater advantage the features of his intended sitter. His endeavours to gain an entrance were, however, ineffectual, and he consoled himself for the disappointment by repairing to the other theatre. Unluckily, while he was standing in the crowd, a slight shower chanced to fall, not such as to induce him to return home; but sufficient to communicate so much dampness to his dress, as to become afterwards the cause of his catching cold when heated in the theatre. Mr. Cumberland happening to call just at the time, and finding him in a most dangerous state, and under the defective advice of an apothecary, immediately sent for Sir Richard Jebb, who, as soon as he saw his patient, instantly ordered him to drink a bottle of Madeira. He afterwards told Mr. Cumberland, that Mr. Romney's life could not have been saved, if advice had been delayed half an hour longer. This was another well timed act of Mr. Cumberland's friendship, which ought to be recorded; and which I have still greater pleasure

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in mentioning here, because it marks the commencement of Mr. Romney's friendship with that eminent physician and excellent man. After this, Sir Richard always attended him in every illness, and with that liberality which constantly distinguished his character, would never on any account accept a fee. The only return, I believe, that he could ever be prevailed upon to accept, was a small tinted drawing of the head of their common friend, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, copied from the large picture painted for Earl Gower. Sir Richard himself did indeed afterwards sit, but it was only to gratify Mr. Romney, who was anxious to possess the portrait of a friend whom he esteemed so highly. It was a large half-length, but never finished. The head, however, was perfect, admirably painted, and in every respect corresponding to the genius of the painter, and to the merit of the physician. It afterwards became the property of Mr. Jebb, of Ireland, Sir Richard's nephew.

The following year (1777) Mr. Paine Knight, who ranked so high as a scholar and a man of taste, in consequence of some conversation he had had with Mr. Romney when they met in Italy, favoured him with a communication from Rome, containing a learned and metaphysical dissertation on the passions as connected with painting.

In 1778 Mr. Hayley published his Epistle on Painting, and addressed it to Mr. Romney. It was a popular performance at the time, and being anonymous, was attributed to Mr. Cumberland. It is certainly an elegant composition, and the most polished of all Mr. Hayley's works. Though Mr. Romney was now in full practice, the acknowledged rival of Sir Joshua, and needed no adventitious aid to increase his celebrity; yet a compliment so flattering did not fail to inspire him with warm feelings of gratitude towards the author, which

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were soon afterwards ripened into friendship,—friendship ardent and confidential on his part. The influence, however, that this connexion had upon Mr. Romney's subsequent life, was in many respects injurious. It is an invidious task to disturb the repose of the dead, and I have no inclination to animadvert upon the character of Mr. Hayley further than as it comes in contact with the life of Mr. Romney. He, however, by writing his own Memoirs, and leaving them for posthumous publication, may in truth be said to have perpetrated that unholy deed himself, and to have set an example for the justification of others. Mr. Hayley's friendship was grounded on selfishness, and the means, by which he maintained it was flattery. By this art he acquired a great ascendency over the mind of Mr. Romney, and knew well how to avail himself of it for selfish purposes. He was able, also, by a canting kind of hypocrisy, to confound the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to give a colouring to conduct, that might, and probably did mislead Mr. Romney on some occasions. He likewise drew him too much from general society, and almost monopolized him himself, and thus narrowed the circle of his acquaintance and friends. By having intimated an intention of writing Mr. Romney's life, he made him extremely afraid of doing any thing that might give offence. There was a wrong-headedness in the general conduct of Mr. Hayley, arising from the influence of powerful passions, that disqualified him for being a judicious and prudent adviser; yet he was always interfering in the affairs of Mr. Romney, and volunteering his advice: and I have too much reason to believe, that whatever errors the latter may have committed, they were mainly owing to the counsel, or instigation of Mr. Hayley. I will just mention one instance, though certainly of comparatively little importance, yet sufficient to illustrate my assertion. Mr. Hayley admits, that when Meyer, the Royal Academician, so competent to form a just

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opinion on the subject, endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Romney to exhibit, in order to be admitted a member of that body, he himself used every argument to dissuade him from it: assigning as his motive the *mental peculiarities* of his friend. The covert reason, I have no doubt was, that, as he himself was not favourably disposed towards the Court, he did not wish Mr. Romney to become connected with it. The ostensible motive, however, is certainly absurd; for Mr. Romney's mental peculiarities, by which, I suppose, he means his nervous irritability, and quick susceptibility of feeling, only became an infirmity when his health was impaired by application and age: but, at any time, his natural love of tranquillity, and dislike of all squabbles and intrigues, would have guarded him from those disquietudes and vexations, which Mr. Hayley pretends to have foreseen. Did any of such consequences follow on his exhibiting five years before with the chartered Society in Spring Gardens? Had he become a R. A. it did not follow that he should have aspired to the President's Chair: though his high professional talents and powerful genius might have justified him in entertaining such ambition; yet, from what I know of the character of his mind, I am sure he would have shunned any such preeminence. He did not seek to gratify vain ambition, his sole object was to excel in his art, and nothing could have arisen from the circumstance of his being a R. A. that would in any respect have ruffled or disturbed his feelings:—but, certainly, many important advantages might have resulted from it. The royal patronage might have been extended to him; at least, his not exhibiting was assigned as a reason why it was not. But the principal advantage would have been, the making his best works familiar to the public, and the leaving a record of their existence; whereas most of them are now hid in obscurity, or only seen by a small domestic circle; and many, perhaps, suffered to perish from not being duly appreciated. It would also

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have stimulated his exertion, and made him produce a greater number of excellent pictures.

At first it was my intention to have made a list of all the portraits painted by Mr. Romney after his return from Italy; but finding that I could not be sufficiently accurate, I shall content myself with mentioning those pictures only, which were remarkable, either as containing more than one figure, or for their superior merit, or on account of the individuals represented: yet even of this description there must have been several which have not come to my knowledge.

About this time, or soon after, he painted the following pictures.—

Mrs. Morris and her son.

Mrs. Charles Hawkins and children.

The Children of Earl Gower; a large picture representing three young ladies with a little boy dancing, and the oldest daughter playing upon the tambourine. This is a masterly performance, and inferior to none as a fine display of graceful portraits.

The Duchess of Gordon and her son the Marquis of Huntley.

The Countess of Albemarle and her son Lord Albemarle, with dogs.

Mr. Charteris' (Lord Elcho's) children, in one piece.

Mrs. Stables and two children.

The Beaumont Family, (of Whitby Beaumont, near Wakefield;) a large picture representing four brothers and a sister contemplating the portrait of a deceased brother.

Mrs. Prescot and three children.

Master and Miss Boone.

Master and Miss Clavering, with dogs. In this picture Miss Clavering is represented caressing a pup upon her bosom, and Master Clavering holding two spaniels in a string; one of which,

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with a strong expression of maternal anxiety and impatience, is leaping up against the boy, who partly intervenes between it and its offspring. This is a consummate performance; it excels in all the constituents of a good picture: the portraits have all that unaffected grace and elegance which belong to well-bred children: the grouping of them with the dogs is performed in so able a manner as to shew a perfect knowledge of composition; the colouring, also, is beautiful and natural; and the distribution of light and shade is so skilfully managed as to produce the most pleasing effect. The dogs are all life and action. Would that a few such pictures as this (and there are many by Mr. Romney) were placed in the British Institution, that he might have a fair chance with Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Two Miss Hills; half whole length.

Master and Miss Cornwall, children of Sir George Cornwall, Bart.

Sir James Harris; three-quarters, and three copies.

Lady Harris; half-length.

Copy of Lady Harris, and Miss Harris in one picture; half-length.

Sir Hyde Parker, captain of the Phœnix Frigate; whole-length. I should like much to see this picture placed in some public exhibition by the side of Sir Joshua's celebrated portrait of Captain Keppel.

Lady Elizabeth Compton, afterwards Lady George Cavendish.

An Indian Chief; three-quarters.

Lady Craven; two three-quarters: one for General Smith, the other for Horace Walpole.

The large picture of Colonel Johnes and his friends, begun in 1779, but not finished till some years after; in which Mrs. Johnes is represented as a fortune-teller. I apprehend that this picture was burnt at the conflagration of Hafod.

Miss C. and Miss Hester Grenville, daughters of the Honourable Mr. Grenville.

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Master Tempest, with a horse; whole-length.
Master and Miss Conway.
Mrs. Blair and Child; half-length.
Mrs. Hartley and Children.
Mrs. Chrispigny and Children; oval.
Mrs. Corbet and Child; whole-length.
Lord Stanley and Lady Charlotte.
Mrs. Bracebridge and Child; whole-length: recumbent.

One of the earliest pictures Mr. Romney painted after his return from Italy, was that of *Cupid and Psyche*; most probably before he was established in Cavendish Square. The figures were much smaller than the natural size, entirely nude, and painted with great tenderness and delicacy. It had been missing for many years, and was only found a short time before he left Cavendish Square, among a heap of unfinished pictures; and then given to Mr. Long, the surgeon, according to a former agreement. This gentleman, being an amateur, and priding himself on his skill in handling a pencil, had the presumption afterwards to place a piece of drapery where none was required; not from any delicacy of his own certainly, but probably to please another. I mention this circumstance here, in order that, if ever the picture should come before the public, this drapery may not be attributed to Mr. Romney.

About this time he painted the Head of a *Sibyl* on a three-quarter's canvass. She was represented *en profile*, with spiral ringlets. He used to lend it to copy, and upon one occasion, it was never returned.

The following extract from a copy of verses, written by Mr. Hayley in reference to the portrait of Lady Warwick, painted about this time, will not, perhaps be improperly inserted here.

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VENUS TO LADY WARWICK.

"Sweet model of my chaster power!
Simplicity and grace thy dower!
Behold! thy finish'd portrait stand
The masterpiece of Romney's hand!
Whom I with pleasure taught to trace
The sweetness of that lovely face,
Whose smile is so beyond divine
'Tis flattering me to call it mine!
'Twas I, and Romney owns as much,
Who guided every finer touch,
Directing still with secret hints,
The form, the character, the tints;
'Twas I, among his pencils plac'd
One with superior virtue grac'd,
Made of soft down from Cupid's feather,
Which all the Graces tied together.
'Twas I, upon his canvass spread
The bloom of my celestial red,
And fearing time the tint might tarnish,
Glaz'd it with that immortal varnish,
Which I so sacred still have kept,
That tho' the Graces pray'd and wept,
They could not tempt me to reveal it,
Nor for their favourite Reynold's steal it."

The first time I saw Mr. Romney after his return from Italy, was in January, 1777, when I found him painting in the evening by lamp-light. He was then engaged upon the subject of *The Accusation of*

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Susannah by the two Elders, which he painted in *chiaro 'scuro*. He had a shade before the lamp to obstruct the direct light, but that which was reflected from the picture must still have been very injurious to his eyes. This picture was never finished, owing probably to the difficulty and disagreeableness of painting by an artificial light. The figures were upon a small scale and numerous. After he had relinquished this picture, he began to make designs in chalks, sometimes upon a scale as large as life; and innumerable studies for his portfolio:—thus he was generally occupied till bed time. During spring he often worked thirteen hours a day, commencing at eight, or earlier, and, except when engaged out, which was not frequently, prolonging his application till eleven at night.

He mostly painted a gentleman's three-quarters portrait in three or four sittings; especially, if no hands were introduced. The first sitting was three quarters of an hour, the other two about an hour and a half each; and if another was required, it did not exceed three quarters of an hour. During the spring months he frequently had five sitters a day, and occasionally even six. The only time he had for painting fancy-subjects, was in the intervals between the sitters, or when they disappointed him; and having a canvass at hand, he often regarded such a disappointment, as a school-boy would a holiday. The finishing, however, of his portraits required those intervals; but, being a less pleasing occupation, it was too frequently postponed. This in some measure accounts both for his unfinished portraits, and his fancy-pieces, which, being put aside in haste, were either forgotten, or mislaid. There were, however, other co-operating causes which contributed to increase the number of both.

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When he painted *Tragedy and Comedy nursing Shakspeare—The infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions*—and *Alope*—in all which a nude infant was introduced, he had for a model a fine child belonging to a soldier of the Guards. It happened unfortunately that it died while several other similar pictures were in progress; which, on that account, were never finished: viz.—*A Group of Children in a Boat drifted out to Sea,* the nurse on the beach in distress. The infantine playfulness of the children, *in quibus spectatur securitas et ætatis simplicitas,* contrasted with the peril of their situation and the eager anxiety of the nurse, rendered this composition interesting: and, as it was capable of the highest degree of sweet colouring, by the harmonious combination of the azure tints of the sky and sea with the tender carnations of the children; I have no doubt but Mr. Romney would have made it a picture of uncommon beauty, and fit to rival any similar work by Titian or Albano—had not the untimely death of this child put an end to his endeavours. This Design was bought in Mr. Romney's sale by Mr. Hoppner, the painter.

He had a servant boy with a fine countenance, whom he had begun to employ as a model for a picture, representing *A Shepherd Boy asleep watched by his Dog at the approach of a thunder-storm.* This was one of those natural subjects, in which Gainsborough so much excelled: and from the promise that this picture gave in so early a stage, I am confident that had it been finished, it would have ranked with the best works of that master, or with those of Murillo; but unluckily, the lad having been guilty of some misconduct, was hastily dismissed, and the picture was never afterwards touched.

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Another picture of the same class, representing *A young Girl sorrowing over a Fawn just killed by Lightning,* though in a state of great forwardness, was left unfinished for want of a Fawn to paint after. There was a beautiful expression of tenderness and feeling in the face and action of this girl, that made her uncommonly interesting; and left an impression of regret on the mind of the spectator, that so trivial a circumstance should have prevented its completion. This picture was given to Mr. Hayley.

Another picture of a similar character, which represented *Two young Girls in great distress, in consequence of a She-Goat having overturned their milk-pail in its impatience to approach its Kid in their possession,*—was in like manner left incomplete for want of a shaggy she-goat. Nothing could surpass the truth of expression in these two children, who, though their countenances were clouded with vexation, still retained the fascinating characteristics of beauty. This picture was bought in Mr. Romney's sale by the late Mr. Walsh Porter.

The picture of *Nature unveiling herself to Shakspeare,* to which Miss Helen Maria Williams alludes in the following verses, remained unfinished, and perished in the wreck of his works at Hampstead.

"And Romney's graceful pencil flow,
That nature's look benign pourtrays,
When to her infant Shakspeare's gaze
The partial nymph "unveil'd her awful face*,"
And bade "his colours clear" her features trace."

The idea, however, was carried further in *The infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions.*

* Gray's Progress of Poesy, whence Mr. Romney originally took the idea.

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I could enumerate many other unfinished fancy-pieces in all stages of progress, which, from divers impeding causes, were suffered to accumulate in every corner of the house: no picture, however, was ever set aside from any difficulty in the art itself; it was always occasioned by some extraneous circumstance which prevented his progress at the time. I could also mention several other causes which contributed to produce those vast heaps of unfinished portraits that obstructed the passage to his gallery. The chief were the poverty or meanness of the parties to whom the pictures belonged; which might, however, have been obviated had Mr. Romney enforced the first payment: several finished pictures were likewise abandoned for the same reasons. There was one full-length, finished except the background, which I cannot forbear to mention here on account of its superior excellence. It stood for about twenty years in his gallery or passages, and was at length sold in the sale of his pictures for about the price of the canvass.—It was the portrait of Lord Amelius Beauclerk, when a midshipman. I have known ladies' portraits amounting to the value of a thousand guineas, remain unfinished for many months for want of a model with fine hands and arms. Some portraits were abandoned in consequence of crim. con.; but more frequently a less flagrant vice led to the same result: it was no uncommon circumstance, that a *chere amie* having been brought to sit for her portrait, both she and the picture were deserted before the latter was finished; and Mr. Romney, not only lost his labour, but what was of far more importance to him—his most valuable time. In cases of this kind I should recommend to painters, to insist upon full payment at the first sitting; unless indeed the extraordinary beauty of the female should stamp a value upon the picture equal to the sitting price.

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Of the unproductive waste of Mr. Romney's time and labour, I shall mention only two other remarkable instances. The first claims especial notice, both as it records the destruction of a very fine picture, which may be regarded as a public loss; and, also, as it may operate as a warning to future painters. He painted a half-length portrait of Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, for the Duchess of Beaufort. She was represented sitting upon the ground, with her countenance elevated, and looking upwards. There was much dignity and grace in the expression and attitude, and it was a perfect likeness of her when she was in the meridian of her beauty. Her dress was black silk. The picture graced his gallery many years. Some eight or ten years afterwards, her Grace called and requested that Mr. Romney would repaint the face, and make it like her as she was at that time. She sat once, but came no more—and the picture was spoiled. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, sat to him three times, after long intervals; and each time he commenced a new picture, but none proceeded beyond the first sitting. Her Grace, I believe, was in earnest, but the avocations of fashion prevented her attendance. The last time she sat was in April, 1791, for a kit-cat portrait: at the same time, also, Lady Elizabeth Forster sat for her portrait of the same size. The latter was paid for by Mr. Crawfurd and sent to him, and I should suppose will now be an ornament of Devonshire House. I am the more particular in mentioning these circumstances, because it is possible that this beautiful picture may be attributed to Reynolds.

It appears by the following extract from a letter of Mr. Romney's addressed to his brother in 1793, that the great influx of new sitters, and his own declining health, were, also, among the causes which latterly contributed to augment the number of unfinished portraits.

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"My health is not at all constant—my nerves give way, and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last, to be enabled to finish the numbers I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces.—There is a delight in the novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished; but it must be done."

No artist could be more liberal and generous than he in the exercise of his profession. Had he been made to understand that it would give pleasure to a friend to have his portrait painted, he would have taken the first favourable opportunity to gratify his wishes; and would have exerted himself with more zeal than if he had been painting for mere money. He seems, indeed, upon all occasions connected with his profession, to have regarded lucre as a secondary object. His prices were always too low, and it was only with reluctance that he could at any time be prevailed upon by his friends to raise them higher; yet had he done so in a greater degree and painted fewer portraits, it would not only have added to his reputation, but increased his profits also.

In 1786 he painted portraits to the amount in value of three thousand five hundred and four guineas, when his price was only twenty guineas for a three-quarters. This excess of employment induced him to raise his price to twenty five guineas, but had he raised it to thirty, it would not have occasioned any diminution of sitters. Immediately on his return from Italy, he commenced with fifteen guineas for a three-quarters, but soon raised it to eighteen, which he continued till 1781. From the beginning of which year to January, 1787, he had twenty; from this to October, 1789, twenty five; and

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from 1789 to 1793 his price was thirty guineas, when he advanced it to thirty five guineas. The price of a half-length was double that of a three-quarters, and a whole-length double that of a half-length, and the intermediate sizes charged accordingly.

His conduct with respect to the Shakspeare scheme is another proof of his disinterestedness as far as regards emolument. Indeed, his enthusiasm in favour of that undertaking was at one time so great, that he would have painted gratis rather than that it should not have taken place. In fact, the idea of it originated from himself individually: he had often ruminated upon it in his solitary hours; for he had always regarded Shakspeare as an author abounding in those picturesque conceptions and representations which may be so easily transferred to the canvass by an imaginative painter. But at a dinner given by Mr. Josiah Boydell, at Westend, in 1787, when Shakspeare became the topic of conversation, (induced probably by the circumstance of Mr. Romney's being at that time engaged in painting *The Tempest*, in which Mr. Hayley had sat as the model for Prospero,)—he with his usual ardour and enthusiasm, then gave utterance to his conceptions, and suggested the plan of a National Gallery of pictures painted from that great dramatist, which would be both honourable to the country, and to the poet, and contribute essentially to the advancement of historical painting. The idea being in unison with the feelings of the company, was received with rapture. The party consisted of several distinguished individuals; viz. Messrs. West, Hayley, Alderman Boydell, Romney, Hoole the translator of Ariosto, Paul Sandby, Daniel Braithwaite, George Nicol, and the Host. Mr. Nicol by since claiming the merit of having been the first to propose this scheme, has been guilty of a misrepresentation. He might, however, have pleaded

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a secondary claim; for, being sufficiently alive to the interests of his own profession, but devoid of all feeling for the art of painting, he proposed as an improvement, that it should be accompanied with a splendid edition of the plays, decorated with prints from the pictures; which corresponding also with the views of the Boydells as print-sellers, was in like manner approved of by the party. I was not in town at the time, but heard the subject frequently mentioned afterwards. I met the same party at a subsequent dinner at West-end, where several of the principal historical painters were present. I remember sitting between Messrs. Westall and Farrington. Sir Joshua was not yet conciliated. He, knowing the origin of the undertaking, was reluctant and shy; but being strongly pressed, he yielded at length; not, however, without taking especial care to secure his own terms. He had a thousand guineas for Macbeth, five hundred pounds of which were paid down on the nail before he had touched a brush. West had a thousand for King Lear, and the choice of his engraver, which was a great point: whereas Mr. Romney only asked six hundred for *The Tempest,* and liberally gave the Boydells afterwards, *The infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions.* He was not even paid this sum till many years after. By withdrawing his labour from portraiture to the performance of this picture (The Tempest) he lost more than two thousand guineas. Not to mention the waste of much valuable time and labour expended in preparing other pictures, which were rendered frustrate by the hasty completion of the Gallery. His enthusiasm, however, soon began to cool when he discovered that the Boydells were making a commercial speculation of it, which was in fact the cause of its failure.

As I am upon the subject, I might as well make my observations here respecting the picture of *The Tempest,* although it is anticipating

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circumstances of subsequent occurrence. Before a Shakspeare Gallery was ever thought of, except by himself (as I have already mentioned) Mr. Romney had begun a picture representing Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban; and in the background, a shipwreck. I have the original sketch now in my possession, and it is in every respect satisfactory as a composition; but after the scheme had been embraced by the Boydells, some officious individual suggested to Mr. Romney that this picture would not be regarded by the critics as an historical composition, as it consisted of only three figures not sufficiently combined. The consequence was, as might have been expected from a man of his diffident mind, that the canvass was diminished on the right so as to exclude Caliban, and enlarged on the left so as to allow the shipwreck to be advanced to the foreground. By this alteration he endeavoured to unite two principal actions, which were essentially distinct, though referring to one another—an anomaly in composition, which nothing could justify but the supposed supernatural agency of Prospero. The result was, that what he had intended to have effected with a little additional labour, proved to be a source of endless toil—a struggle with impossibilities; and he could have painted three historical pictures on any other subjects, in less time, and with less effort. It, however, contains in an eminent degree, all the other great essentials of an historical picture—spirited action, correct delineation, character, and expression. It is also rich in colouring, without being overcharged with gums and varnishes: and the general effect is imposing and grand. A far greater irregularity has been committed by Raffaelle in his incomparable picture of the Transfiguration; in which two principal actions are brought together, which have no relation to each other except a supposed coincidence of time.

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Of the pictures in preparation for the Gallery, there were some which he had studied much, and was ready to transfer to the canvass: viz.—*The Banquet,* and *The Cavern Scene,* in Macbeth; and the subject from the first act of the Tempest, which has already been described in another part of these Memoirs. Others he had actually begun to paint: viz.—*Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page,* from the Merry Wives of Windsor, in which the heads were finished. He had made great progress, also, in another, representing *Margery Tourdain and Bolingbroke conjuring up the Fiend;* but in this he was anticipated by Opie. The last two were destroyed along with many others by being placed in open situations for want of room, and exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather during the winter after he went to reside at Hampstead. Also, *Lady Hamilton in the character of the Maid of Orleans,* intended as a companion to the Cassandra. This was bought at the sale of his pictures by Mr. Stewardson, the artist. But when he perceived that it was the intention of the Boydells to employ the older and established masters no more than was sufficient to give an impulse to the undertaking, and to complete it by the works of young artists for low prices:—that extraordinary haste was used to bring it to a conclusion, so that, instead of having some attractive novelties every year to keep alive the public interest, the whole display was made nearly at once;—and that, in consequence, indifference on the part of the public was already beginning to shew itself—he directed his attention to other objects, regretting that disinterestedness and liberality were qualities little appreciated among dealers and speculators.

When Mr. Romney returned from Italy, his talents, both natural and acquired, were of the first order for poetic painting; but circumstanced as he was, being then in his forty second year, and without

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a shilling, it became necessary in the first place, to provide for his subsistence, which could only be done by the means of portrait-painting; and the nobler object of his studies was reluctantly postponed to a future day. Mr. Fuseli has ill-naturedly said in his edition of Pilkinton's Dictionary of Painters, that "Mr. Romney was made for the times, and the times for him." The first part of this assertion is so far true, that he was able to accommodate himself to the spirit and fashion of the times, by painting portraits of the highest merit, which Mr. Fuseli could not do. But the times were not certainly made for him; because his *forte* was heroic, and imaginative painting, which if he had pursued, he might have painted in a prison. In his endeavours, however, to secure an independence as soon as possible in order that he might devote himself without restraint to the higher pursuits of his profession; he, unfortunately, destroyed his health by his intemperance of study; and thus prevented the object he had in view, by the very means through which he had intended to have promoted it—for when the period arrived in which all those great works which he had projected, were to have been performed, he was become disabled by disease and the infirmities of a premature old age.

"On our quickest decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of time
Steals ere we can effect them."

He followed the precept of Apelles,—*nulla dies sine linea*,—with such reprehensible strictness, as to make no other distinction of the sabbath than that his labour on that day was less severe, and upon subjects more pleasing to his fancy; and so far, it was a kind of relaxation: but the divine institution of the sabbath is so well adapted to the physical constitution of man, that the observance of it can never be an impediment in the way to excellence in any art or science. The faculties of the mind, like the muscles of the body, are

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invigorated by repose; and the renovation of strength more than compensates for any loss of time. I say nothing here of the moral obligation which is imperative on all. I doubt, however, whether a painter might not be as much justified in painting a scripture subject on a Sunday, before or after divine service; as an ecclesiastic in writing a paraphrase on some passage in the sacred volume, or in illustrating some moral precept. For instance, if he were to paint an impressive picture of Christ rebuking the unclean spirit in the boy possessed, or of Christ raising Lazarus, or Jairus's daughter, &c.; the beneficial influence of such a work upon the minds of those who cannot read, might be very great indeed, or even of those who can; for, according to Quintillian, *pictura sic in intimos penetrat affectus, ut ipsam vim dicendi, nonunquam superare videatur.* The truth of which sentiment is further confirmed by the testimony of the critical Horace; who says, though in allusion to scenic representation,

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt occulis subjecta fidelibus.

The Roman Catholic priesthood, aware of this influence, did not neglect to avail themselves of so powerful an instrument in order to instil into the minds of their illiterate flocks, the gross superstitions and idolatries of their religion: had they, however, confined the subjects of their pictures to the written word of God—the historical part especially of the transactions of Christ and his apostles—much benefit might have been derived from such representations.

Mr. Romney, in the midst of his struggle for independence, had his mind still so ardently and constantly bent upon composing pictures from the sublimer works of the poets, that he was happy when any of his literary friends would furnish him with subjects from which he

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might make his selection. Dr. Potter, the learned translator of the Greek Tragedies, was one of his chief contributors.

The following letter from the distinguished translator of the Lusiad, and the two subsequent ones from Dr. Potter, will shew that Mr. Romney had been diligent in his inquiries upon this subject: they will likewise be found to contain other particulars interesting to the general reader.

"Sir,

"As you was so good as to honour me with an intimation of your desire that I would point out to you any subjects of painting which might strike me in the course of my reading, I have taken the liberty to trouble you with this letter.

"I have often thought that the death of David Rizzio in the presence of Mary queen of Scots, who was then about two and twenty, was an excellent subject for a painter, who could blend the tender and terrific, and great expression might be thrown into the figures of Darnley and the other assassins.

"You have been so good as to talk of attempting the apparition by the Cape of Good Hope. You know much better how to group the story than I can suggest, but there can be no harm in offering my ideas. It is a night-scene—I would have the hind castle of Gama's ship near, with a shortened view of the side, the other two ships at a little farther distance. Around the stern of Gama's ship the breaking of the waves to give some light, which is nature. Between the ships and the rocky Cape I would place the apparition as if coming from the rock, hovering in the clouded air. The poem says there were

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neither moon nor stars, but the picture must have some light. I have seen the breaking of the waves in a dark night look fiery, red, and glimmering; this I have already hinted; and I think the pale gleam of some of those streaks called the northern lights would add to the terrific solemnity of the whole. All the above, however, is merely offered as hints, and perhaps erroneous. But the passions to be expressed by the apparition are in my own line, and as drawn in the poem, are those of melancholy gloom, the rage of disappointed pride, and the ferocious consolation of revenge. Gama on the hind deck, however small, ought to express horror and intrepidity.

"The other picture from the Lusiad, which I think you said was recommended to you by Lord Hardwicke and the Poet Laureat, was the crowning of the skeleton of the beautiful Inez. At first I own I did not like the subject; but on better thoughts I think the pencil of Romney would overcome every difficulty. But were I to offer a hint, I would by no means have any more of the skeleton to appear than the hands. Under a sheet, properly disposed, the emaciated body might appear, and the face have double effect; the crown on such a reclining head, the sceptre as if dropping from her dead hand, the nobility kissing the bones of the other hand, the exquisite grief, yet firm look of the king, her husband, in fulfilling his vow that she should be crowned queen of Portugal, and the solemn horror of the nobility in going through this ceremony, are circumstances to which you will do justice, and which will also give scope to your exertions.

"Be so good as to remember my best compliments to Mr. Braithwaite when you see him; and when any other subject strikes me

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I shall think myself happy if the smallest hint should afford you any thing worthy of your attention.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"W. I. MICKLE."

Oxford, April 12, 1779.

"Dear Sir,

"I have the pleasure of telling you that my portrait arrived safe last night, with no more soil upon it than what was easily wiped off with a dry handkerchief. It now makes a very conspicuous figure in my parlour, and is ready to shew my neighbours how great an honour you have done me. As I apprehend you wish to hear that it came undamaged, I cannot omit giving you the earliest account of it, and at the same time of sending you my most grateful thanks for so very valuable a present. I have some expectations of seeing you about the middle of October.

"I am persuaded that the scene in Alcestis, which you mean, is not where she dies, but where she is brought back to her husband; this I will immediately transcribe for you, as soon as I can see Mr. Milles, at present he is not in Norfolk: it is long, I shall send you the whole, and as it will make a large packet, I wish to send it to you free. If, however, I mistake your intention, and the scene where she dies, is what you would chuse, you have only to signify your pleasure, and that also shall be sent you. With the greatest respect,

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obliged and obedient servant,

"R. POTTER."

Scarning, 14 Augt., 1779.

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Scarning, 26 Dec., 1780.

"Dear Sir,

"You have such an aversion to writing that I know it is in vain to expect the favour of a letter from you; therefore with regard to yourself I must be contented with hoping you are well. You may, however, receive some pleasure from knowing that the Volume of the English Euripides is finished, nay more, it is in the press, and will be published as soon as the printer can get through his work; but I fear this will not be till the end of March; when the book is ready to be delivered, I shall take a journey to town of necessity, as I shall not be able to settle the list of subscribers without waiting in person on some gentlemen who are too great to be addressed by letter, and who, I flatter myself, are friendly to me. My daughter sent me word that she left my rude copy of the Bacchæ at your house; I do not apprehend that it can afford you any scene for a picture. I am now at work upon the Iphigenia at Aulis, which I hope to finish before I come to town: if you wish to have the scene of her sacrifice, I will bring it with me, and that of Polyxena, which is very fine. I am now going upon a visit near Norwich, where I expect to be on Thursday evening; from thence I shall send this letter, for the sake of a postscript, which I shall then have occasion to add.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your faithful humble servant,

"R. POTTER."

"P. S.—Tomorrow I shall send you from hence a Turkey, which will be at the Bull in Bishopsgate Street on Saturday about two in the afternoon. I shall be glad to hear that it arrives safe."

Norwich, 28th.

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Dr. Potter's translation of Æschylus was read by Mr. Romney immediately after its publication, and he was so forcibly impressed by the boldness and sublimity of the subjects selected by that early dramatist, and by the simple, but vigorous manner in which they were treated, that he called him the *painter's poet*, and ranked him next to Shakspeare as a powerful delineator of the stronger passions.

It was about this period that he composed those two admirable designs, *The Ghost of Darius*, and *Atossa's Dream;* and it would have been fortunate, if the drudgery of portrait-painting had allowed him sufficient time to have converted them into pictures, while the imagination was still warm with their first conception.

Subjects of the sublime, in which the powerful passions are represented, were, I think, the most congenial to Mr. Romney's mind. He had a perfect knowledge of the effects which the violent emotions of the mind produce upon the features of the face, and the action of the body; so that he could impart to the eye a language almost as expressive as that of the tongue, and communicate to the muscles and limbs all that appropriate action which they assume according to the impulse of different passions; he could represent with exact discrimination the shades by which kindred affections differ from each other, and even depict that agony of distress, when conflicting passions lacerate the tenderest feelings of the heart—which is the highest effort of skill—the *acme* of pictorial expression: and his designs, representing the struggle between disappointed love and maternal affection in the bosom of Medea, so beautifully described in the epigram on the picture painted by Timomachus;—are convincing proofs of his ability in this respect. In short, if there was any part of his art in which he more especially excelled, it was in expression,

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which is the soul of painting. The figure of Atossa, in the design of *Darius's Ghost* above mentioned, is alone sufficient to illustrate and confirm my observations. It is impossible to express more in so few strokes; they are full of mind and soul. Fear has deprived the muscles of their firmness, and her knees seem to tremble beneath her.—"The joints of *her* loins were loosed, and *her* knees smote one against another."

Notwithstanding Mr. Romney's ardent enthusiasm for heroic painting, he had a rich and elegant fancy, and a nice perception of the charms and graces of female beauty; particularly of that fascinating reserve, which results from innocence and virtue: he had, also, a correct feeling and knowledge of the unrestrained actions and playful antics of children; and by combining these respective impressions, he formed in his imagination those ideal beings, called *Fairies*, which have so frequently been employed as agents in poetic fictions.

There are certain felicities both of conception and execution, in painting as well as in poetry, in which an artist may be said

"To catch a grace beyond the reach of art."

That poetic fervour and almost magical influence, which directs both the pencil and the pen, and gives birth to those felicities, was powerfully felt by Mr. Romney. He had a just conception of the *beau ideal* which he had acquired by a diligent study of the antique while at Rome; so that even in his portraits he was able to combine ideal grace with the realities of nature. He could impart to his female figures that indescribable something—that *Je ne sai quoi* which captivates the spectator without his being able to account for it. He knew how to unite Grecian grace with Etruscan simplicity. The small cartoon, representing the *Death of Cordelia*, is a beautiful

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specimen of this kind of composition; the weeping mutes are exquisite. Indeed, his love of the *simplex munditiis* has, upon one occasion, betrayed him into an impropriety. In *The Dream of Atossa*, Asia, instead of being arrayed in gorgeous apparel, is attired like her companion Græcia. Simplicity, however, is a charm that a painter should never lose sight of;—grace can hardly subsist without it.

In the subordinate parts of a picture he generally excelled. He painted drapery with great facility and quickness; and, though it is often slight, it is always masterly. In his back-grounds he was not so happy, he seems to have painted with too much body in his colours, and with too full a brush; so that he sometimes missed those delicate touches which express distance. In this department of his art he was certainly inferior to Reynolds, whose back-grounds are often exquisite bits of landscape.

In the colouring of Mr. Romney's portraits there is a purity, a clearness, and relief, which give them the appearance of reality. In representing the carnations of the female face his skill was pre-eminent. It might truly be said, in the metaphorical language of Anacreon, that he

Γραφε ρινα και παρειας,
Ροδα τω γαλακτι μιξας.

That is, in portraying the lovely features of woman, he combined the three primary colours of the most delicate character—for under the term *milk* may be comprehended all the gradations of tint from the skimmed blue to the yellow cream.

He never sacrificed the durability of his colours in order to obtain by meretricious arts a temporary applause for rich and mellow tints.

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His style is clear, chaste, and unsophisticated; and he will obtain from time, what others have anticipated by trick. His pictures which were painted sixty years ago, appear now as fresh as if recently taken from the easel. As he never put his name upon his pictures, I fear that many of them may hereafter be transferred to Reynolds, especially when those by the latter are become evanescent; although there is in fact a very manifest difference between the styles of the two masters. I feel myself justified in making these precautionary observations, because, as I know that posthumous fame was an object of Mr. Romney's ambition, I should deem myself deficient in duty, were I not to endeavour to obviate every circumstance that might be the means of depriving him of any part of his merited reputation.

I have upon a former occasion, mentioned Mr. Romney's ability in portraying dogs; he by a rare rapidity and facility of pencil, could impart to them all the apparent action and vivacity of life. I shall just notice here three instances as specimens of his skill in that respect.—The representation of a Pomeranian dog in a half-length picture of a naked boy, (I believe Master Mawby, son of Sir Joseph.) Nothing can exceed the beautiful grouping of this boy and dog; the colouring also is exquisite, and the effect altogether most charming. The boy is about three or four years old, with his hair hanging in loose and graceful ringlets. It is only by seeing such pictures as this that Mr. Romney's talents can be duly appreciated.—The beautiful spaniels in Master and Miss Clavering's picture, already described—And a *Spaniel baiting a Cat;* the portrait of a favourite dog belonging to the Duchess of Richmond, which Mr. Romney, with his usual liberality, presented to her Grace as a token of his respect.

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Although I have already alluded to his quick manner of painting, I shall, notwithstanding, adduce two examples confirmatory of my former observations, because they occurred under my own immediate notice. One was in the picture of a youth of the name of Pelham, represented in his shooting dress, and reposing upon a bank, having a brace of dead partridges lying near him. The birds were painted in half an hour. They are done in a dashing, and apparently slovenly style; but when seen at a proper distance, and in accordance with the general effect, the deception becomes so perfect, that one might almost be tempted to go and take them up. The other, in the portrait of the beautiful Miss Shakspear, who was afterwards married to Mr. Oliver. A quarter of a year after her accouchement she wished to have her baby introduced into her picture. It was, accordingly, represented sleeping upon her lap, and completely finished in half an hour, and with such truth of nature as to impress the spectator with an idea of hearing it respire.

His versatility of talent was great. In the list of his paintings in the lottery, before he left Kendal, is a Landscape with figures, and four pictures on ludicrous subjects. I have seen small miniatures in oil painted by him in the early part of his life; and at different times he has amused himself with drawing in crayons, witness the portrait of *Cowper, the poet,* and *Mrs. Charlotte Smith, the novelist.* I remember a beautiful monumental figure which he moulded in clay, representing a female sitting in a pensive attitude. I have also a tinted drawing of his own portrait.

Although Mr. Romney had neither inclination nor leisure for mixing much in society; yet he occasionally associated with a set of wits,

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who formed themselves into a club about this period; from the fragments of which, afterwards, originated a later one, called *The Uncreasibles*. Of his associates I well remember the older Sheridan, Henderson, the actor, Evans, an eminent bookseller of his day, and a man of rare humour in conversation, the Reverend C. Este, afterwards editor of the World Newspaper, and the author of a Journey through Flanders; and some other distinguished individuals. There was much friendly intercourse between him and Henderson, whose portrait he painted in the character of Macbeth upon a Bolognese half-length. It represents Macbeth accosting the three witches in the heath scene:

> ——————"Live you? or are you aught
> That man may question? you seem to understand me
> By each at once her choppy finger laying
> Upon her skinny lips."——————

It was a very fine picture.—Henderson was a most accomplished actor, and had a fine turn for humour; but his person had defects which no art could conceal. In Falstaff, in which those defects did not appear, or, perhaps, rather aided the character, he was pre-eminent; he wanted, however, expression, and his features were too round. Of course hostile critics did not overlook this defect; and I remember once seeing in a newspaper some commendatory verses, in which an attempt was made to disprove this imputation by appealing to Mr. Romney's picture. The compliment meant for the actor, was unintentionally paid to the painter. This picture was painted about the time when Sheridan and Henderson had their Public Readings. Those by the former were drawling and heavy, but the reading of Tristram Shandy by Henderson was exquisite beyond conception. Mr. Romney being present at one of those recitations, was so forcibly struck with the countenance of a man staring with

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all his attention at Sheridan, that he could not refrain from studying it carefully as an appropriate representation of a witch's face; and having on his return home sketched it on canvass, he afterwards introduced it into the picture of Henderson. The original study I gave to Mr. Stewardson, the painter. The prototype of all Mr. Romney's visionary beings was nature. In the delineation of witches and fairies he was superior to Mr. Fuseli, whose conception of excellence consists in an unnatural extravagance: indeed, in almost all the productions of the latter, whether they are of a sublime or beautiful character, there is the same aberration from just feeling; for when he aspires after grandeur, and imagines that he is treading in the footsteps of Michael Angelo, he generally oversteps his model, and falls into the false sublime. *Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu' un pas:* as Buonaparte has justly observed. In short, whoever imitates Michael Angelo, walks upon the slippery brink of a towering precipice, and he must have a steadier step than Mr. Fuseli to avoid the *bathos* of extravagance. What Horace has said of Pindar as a poet may, perhaps, with equal propriety be applied to Michael Angelo as a painter.

Angelum quisquis studet æmulari
ceratis ope Dedaleâ
Nititur pennis.—

The style of this great master cannot, perhaps, be better expressed than it has been by Agostino Caracci in his sonnet; certainly not more briefly.

Di Michel Angiol la terribil via.

But when Mr. Fuseli attempts to represent the beautiful in art, he is still more remote from the truth of nature. It was a consciousness, perhaps, of Mr. Romney's superiority in a department of the art which he arrogantly regarded as his own exclusive province;

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coupled, I fear, with some private pique, that induced him to speak so unhandsomely of Mr. Romney in his quaint observation.—But to return to the picture of Henderson.—Some years after, *The Unincreasibles*, consisting of eight members including Mr. Romney, clubbed ten guineas a piece and purchased it; and having made a raffle, it fell to the lot of Mr. Long, the surgeon.

It was in January, 1781, that the Lord Chancellor Thurlow first came to sit to Mr. Romney for his portrait at the request of Earl Gower. His Lordship is painted full-length in his robes, with much grandeur, and dignity of character. It is a very admirable portrait, and decidedly superior to the one painted by Sir Joshua. While Lord Thurlow was sitting to Reynolds, his Lordship suggested to him the story of Orpheus and Eurydice as a proper subject for a picture; but, whether he did not regard it in the same light, or his conceptions did not correspond with those of the Chancellor with respect to the manner of treating it; it is certain that Lord Thurlow then began to entertain a less favourable opinion of that celebrated painter's genius. In the course of his sitting to Mr. Romney his Lordship proposed the same subject to him also, and was so much pleased with his observations, which corresponded with his own ideas, that he condescended to translate the whole episode from Virgil for his use. Which translation, in the autograph of Lord Thurlow, is now in my possession, and which I shall take the liberty of inserting here on account of the able comments and illustrations which accompany it.

"The text, rendered word for word, is certainly a more awkward, but (to a close observer who minds the subject more than the style) a juster picture, than looser translation ever gives of the original. Eurydice is dead by the bite of a water snake; and

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thus the story proceeds, without the advantage of the author's peculiar neatness and force.

"To assuage with his harp the agony of wounded love, his song was still of thee, sweet wife! of thee, along the lonely shore; of thee, when the morning dawned; of thee, when the evening closed. He entered even the jaws of Tænaros, the lofty portal of Pluto, and the grove shaded with the darkness of horrour. He addressed the ghosts, and their dread king. Hearts never made to melt at human woe. But, struck with his song, thin Shades flocked from the lowest mansions of Erebus. Phantoms of the dead, innumerable as birds sheltered under the leaves, which evening or wintry storms drive from the hills, mothers, husbands, the lifeless forms of mighty heroes, boys, unmarried girls, youths whom their parents saw upon the pile. These the black mud, and shapeless reed, and dull pool of hateful Cocytos confines; and Styx rolls nine times round them. The very cells and inward dungeons of hell were struck, so were the Furies, whose hair is plaited with blue snakes; Cerberus held his triple jaws a-gape; and the wheel of Ixion stopp'd at his approach. And now returning, he had surmounted every danger; Eurydice, let out, approached the region of day—following him behind. Such were the terms imposed by Proserpine—when a sudden oversight surprised the unthinking lover: he stopp'd—and—Eurydice just upon the verge of light—forgetting—overcome with fondness—he looked back—There all his labour was lost, and the laws broken of a power deaf to mercy. Thrice the lakes of Avernus heard the crash of thunder. She cries, what hath undone thy wretched wife, and thee, Orpheus? What excess of phrenzy? lo, the cruel Fates recall me, drowsiness loads my swimming eyes; and now farewell.——I am carried off, enveloped in monstrous night, stretching my nerveless hand to thee, alas! no

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longer thine. She spoke and fleeted from his gaze, as smoke melts into thinner air; nor saw him more, vainly catching at the shadows and eager to say a thousand things; no more the Ferryman of hell allowed him to cross the lakes—what should he do? where betake himself after this double loss? She floated cold upon the Stygian boat; he, they say, for seven long months under a bleak rock, by the waves of desert Strymon, wept lonely, and poured out his complaints to the cold stars; softening tigers, and leading away oaks with his song.

"The point of time, fullest of the painful event, and most marked with the crisis of the story, is the moment of her uttering her last words.

"The scene is in the twilight of hell, far within the massy shapeless jaws of a vast cavern.

"The agitation of the scene makes it more terrible. The torments and horrours of hell had been suspended while the miracle proceeded. When the spell was broken, it shook all the lower world: three crashes of thunder were heard from end to end of that immense region. Such an opening of that solid gloom might produce a livid light; and make a glimpse of the dreary grove, the banks of Cocytos peopled with mournful wanderers, Styx, Cerberus, Ixion, and the rest more horrible. Black and coarse clouds, of a texture all but massy, *(monstrous night,* as she calls it,) gather round the delicate limbs, and bear off the beautiful phantom of Eurydice.

"The action of her figure is still speaking to Orpheus; engrossed with vehement love, and the agony of hopeless grief; and vainly

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stretching forth her hands to him for relief and rescue: but the heaviness of death is on her eye-lids; her eyes maintain that unfixed and uncertain regard, which the poet calls swimming; her lips scarcely open enough to convey her words; her almost pendulous arms and hands are, in part, assisted by the rolling of the clouds to offer themselves to her rescue; her head, which begins to sink on one side, by the same means seems to preserve the posture of addressing him; the rest of her nerveless limbs, just lifted from the ground, appear to be governed and disposed by the torrent of the cloud, which is bearing her off.

"In her countenance appears the fading of perfect beauty. That play of feature, which once made dimples and smiles, is now only traced in a certain sensible delicacy, and soft melancholy. The ringlets of her hair have lost their spring; the muscles of her neck are inert, and beginning to collapse; the form of her breast, though still charming, begins to flatten and sink.

"Any one of these ideas brought too forward will shock the eye; the impossible is the thing required—to shew the last, faint traces of strong passion in a figure without strength; and express the influence of death without its deformity. Richardson has done it wonderfully in the death of Clarissa, to which you are referred. But a part of his idea was christian composure, which left the character of the countenance less complicated.

"In the mean time what is Orpheus doing? The infernal world is breaking before him; and all its original horrours double round him. In the moment of this extreme terrour and astonishment, the condition of Eurydice touches a more feeling fibre, and the characters

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of grief and despair reign among those of horrour and wonder. He is catching at the rack of the clouds, which fold Eurydice. Mere instinct prompted that action—his countenance shews that he never hoped to seize her. He even tries to speak."

Mr. Romney made several designs from this subject. The moment of time which he has generally selected, is when the astonished and afflicted Orpheus extends his arms to embrace his lost Eurydice. Three sketches are in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and two cartoons in the Liverpool Royal Institution; in one of the latter the Fates are represented in a picturesque manner, as dragging Eurydice back from the ardent embrace of her husband. He also began a picture in oil, which was destroyed at Hampstead. All are differently treated, and all well.

Lord Thurlow avowed his preference of Mr. Romney, and said, *Reynolds and Romney divide the town, I am of the Romney faction.* Mr. Hayley, when he mentions this circumstance, as if afraid lest he should incur the displeasure of the partizans of Reynolds, who might in consequence, decry his book, affects to regard the expression as a mere play of words without meaning. His Lordship, however, as Mr. Hayley well knew, was not a man to say any thing without meaning; or to say one thing and mean another. In fact, Mr. Hayley himself entertained the same sentiments, for he says in a letter addressed to me in 1808, the year before he published Mr. Romney's Life; "*between ourselves* I think your father as much superior to Reynolds in *genius*, as he was inferior in *worldly prudence.*" And indeed, after all, he clearly admits as much, by allowing him a larger proportion of the essential endowments of genius, and by making the scale to turn in Reynolds' favour by qualities which have no real

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connexion with his art. I maintain, and am not afraid of avowing it, because I feel I am right,—that Mr. Romney, when in the meridian of his powers, was capable of painting a picture of higher excellence than Reynolds.—I say this, notwithstanding Mr. Northcote, in his Life of Sir Joshua, has made the following absurd and contradictory observation. "Certain it is, that Sir Joshua was not much employed in portraits after Romney grew into fashion, although the difference between those painters was so immense." This sentence may be divided into two parts: the first is an undeniable fact; the second a bold assertion, and only excusable (if excusable at all) as coming from a partial pupil, whose judgment had been blinded by affection and gratitude: but the fact stated in the first part is quite sufficient to confute the assertion in the last; for Mr. Romney was not only able to divert the current of popular opinion from Reynolds, and make it run in his own favour; but he did this in spite of Sir Joshua's powerful and zealous friends, whose influence was unlimited; in spite of the Royal Academy, who, as a body, were hostile to him; and even without the influence of Royal patronage: and thus it continued unabated to the last.—Mr. Romney's narrow circumstances, however, constrained him to devote the best hours of his life to portrait-painting; so that he had not those fine opportunities which Reynolds had, who soon became affluent, of directing his studies to works of imagination; yet still he did enough to establish his character as an historical painter of the first rank. His picture of the *Tempest* combines more of the excellencies of the art than the Cauldron scene by Sir Joshua. Macbeth in the latter wants dignity, energy, and fire; and there is in the whole composition a feebleness unworthy of the practised pencil of Sir Joshua. I beg to compare his Macbeth with the two animated sketches of the same character by Mr. Romney, in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

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If I were to compare the *Cassandra*, by Mr. Romney, with the Thais of Sir Joshua, I should give the preference to the former. *The Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions* is a picture of a higher class than the much extolled one of the Death of Cardinal Beaufort. The attribute which should chiefly characterize the latter, is expression; but in that it fails the most. Nothing can be more insipid and vulgar, more destitute of dignity than Salisbury and Warwick. The face of king Henry is concealed, not, however, upon the principle, which induced Timanthes, the great painter of expression and passion, to hide the countenance of Agamemnon—who, having exhausted all his powers in depicting the different gradations of pity and sorrow, upon the afflicted spectators; to heighten the climax of feeling had recourse to this expedient, in order that the imagination might conceive, what the pencil could not execute. Such a device in the case of this picture was altogether unnecessary; but it was convenient, because it relieved the painter from a task, which he might, perhaps, have found it somewhat difficult to perform. The expression of Beaufort's countenance, which was, I have no doubt, intended as the perfection of art, is manifestly a failure. The eyes of the cardinal writhing in the agonies of death, give no indications of the remorse and despair which rankled at his heart; the whole expression is merely that of bodily pain, and the moral impression is lost. I can conceive that a great painter, in representing this subject, might have produced a countenance so appalling, as almost to petrify the spectator with horror. The excellence of this picture consists chiefly in the colouring; but even in this respect, I will not allow it to possess any superiority over *The Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions*. This latter, however, has a much higher claim to merit, being one of the most poetical of Mr. Romney's pictures; it bears a strong resemblance to Collin's Ode to the Passions, as a work of pure ima-

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gination; but as a work of art, it may be compared to the best of Correggio's pictures. What can be more tender and delicate in colouring, what more graceful and fascinating in design than *Joy* and the *Baby Shakspeare?* What more sweet and lovely than the representation of *Virtuous Love?* In *chiaro 'scuro,* and in the disposition of the figures, there is much also of the manner of Correggio. Ever since this picture was sold at the Shakspeare Gallery—and it was sold for a very inadequate sum, but to whom I do not know—I have regretted its loss. Unfortunately I was not there; but wherever it is, if it exist at all, I deem it well worth five hundred guineas. I wish it was in the National Gallery, the only proper repository for such a picture. I am very sorry that when Mr. Romney gave it to the Boydells, he did not saddle his gift with the condition—that it should be engraved by Sharp. It is a matter of serious concern to his reputation, that most of the prints taken from his pictures, particularly from those that were in the Shakspeare Gallery, are badly executed. He disregarded this important object far too much, important to him especially; as few of his works have ever been before the public, and those have now disappeared. It never occurred to his mind, I am sure, when prints were taken from his pictures, that they might, perhaps, become the only medium through which those pictures would be seen and judged.

Mr. Romney has left numerous historical and fancy sketches which bear ample testimony to his genius. Many of them are conceived with much originality of idea, and have great force and power of expression. Others have exquisite pastoral grace and simplicity. Has Reynolds left any similar proofs of talent?

It was difficult for Mr. Romney to cope with so potent a rival, who abounded in wealth, kept a splendid table, and had a host of

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zealous and powerful friends. Reynolds was a man of the world; he knew well what he was about, and how to promote his own interests; he was not deficient in vanity and display, witness the inscription, written by *himself* under his own portrait sent to the Florentine Gallery. Even when he made his Will and contemplated his dissolution, he did not forget how much might be effected by the influence of friends, and by liberal bequests. Nothing could have been devised more likely to uphold the character, and raise the value of his works, than to leave two hundred pounds a piece to four friends, to be expended in purchasing pictures at his auction; and other similar legacies, to excite gratitude, and stimulate competition for his works. Mr. Romney, on the contrary, had nothing to rely upon but his own genius; which alone enabled him to triumph over difficulties and obstacles, such as few artists have encountered with success.

Never were two persons more opposite in character than these two distinguished painters. I say it with regret, because the peculiarities of Mr. Romney's mind tended much to his prejudice; yet he was not, perhaps, at the bottom, less amiable than his rival. Mr. Romney was retired in his habits, and too reserved; he did not cultivate general society, and, therefore, had few friends. When Reynolds had finished his professional labours for the day, he sought relaxation and recreation in the refined society of accomplished literary men: whereas Mr. Romney in consequence of his nervous and irritable frame, was obliged to have recourse to a different system; and to seek to recruit the energies of his mind by the indulgence of tranquility and quiet: for this reason he generally declined engagements. When the spring was sufficiently advanced to allow him to walk into the country, he sometimes used to drink tea at Kilburn Wells, or some other public place; and when the days were longer, he often went to

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dine at the Long-Room, Hampstead. He was not, however, in these excursions, an inattentive observer of any object that might contribute to his art. He always had a sketch-book and a pencil in his pocket; so that if a picturesque group of children, a peculiar cast of countenance, an effect in the sky, or a plant for a fore-ground happened to present itself to his notice, his pencil was at hand. He had great pleasure in observing evening and twilight effects, and began four pictures, suggested by such observations, representing the visitations of ghosts or fairies at that solemn and fancy-moving hour. He occasionally visited Bagnidge Wells, and other places of resort frequented by the lower orders, as excellent schools for the study of character. Thus he and Reynolds pursued different courses to attain the same end; and each that course which was best suited, according to their respective mental frames, for the attainment of that end: but Mr. Romney, by thus withdrawing from society, necessarily narrowed the circle of his acquaintance, so that his partizans were generally those who admired his pictures without knowing the man.

Perfection does not belong to human nature. Our excellence is only comparative, and they are the best, who have the fewest defects. Mr. Romney undoubtedly had his share of infirmities; but his errors were rather the offspring of circumstance, than originating from any corrupt principle. He was the dupe of his feelings, but exempt from all gross propensities. His honour and his honesty were naturally pure; and he harboured no malevolent passions in his breast. He was free from the debasing influence of avarice, which has been imputed to Sir Joshua. Mr. Cumberland, indeed, has said, that "he had no dislike to money;" but this reflection is as unkind as it is uncandid. Mr. Romney, from having had to struggle for so many years with poverty, had, perhaps, contracted some little habits of parsimony,

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but the mind had no participation in them. Can a man be said to be fond of money who had the generosity to advance his brother six hundred pounds, to fit him out for India, which was all the money he had in the world, and which he had saved in the preceding year? But this Mr. Romney did, and at that period of his life too (aged forty two) when it became highly expedient that he should lose no time in providing for himself. Mr. Cumberland ought to have remembered, that when he himself was in need, after his return from Spain, Mr. Romney advanced him five hundred pounds in the most liberal manner. Being a man of tender feelings, he was ever alive to applications for charity; and the readiness with which he gave, made those applications frequent. He felt every disposition, also, to succour young artists of talent; and whenever he heard of any such impeded by poverty, his purse was open for their assistance. He might truly have said, in the words of Dido,

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

It was not in the want of generosity, but in the misapplication of it, that his fault lay. When a man makes his feelings his guide, he follows an *ignis fatuus*, which may lead him into bogs and quagmires. There was a fibre about Mr. Romney's heart, which the artful and designing knew well how to touch, and make subservient to their own base views and advantage. Whatever errors he committed they mainly sprang from this source.

In 1781 he painted a three-quarters portrait of the beautiful Emily Bertie for Mr. Pott, who took her with him to India, where they both died. He also began a full-length of her in a recumbent posture, which was never finished; the head he afterwards gave to his pupil, Isaac Pocock. There can be no doubt, that the picture of Thais, by Sir Joshua, was the portrait of Emily Bertie, though Mr.

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Northcote denies it stoutly. It is well known that ladies of her description assume different names according as they happen to be connected; she might be Coventry when she sat to Sir Joshua, Bertie when to Mr. Romney, and afterwards Mr. Malone calls her Emily Pott. Mr. Northcote admits that Emily Coventry accompanied a gentleman to the East Indies, where she died; so that the whole affair turns upon the changeable circumstance of a name. With respect to the anecdote which Mr. Northcote has taken such pains to discredit, I see nothing in it that should reflect upon the character of Sir Joshua; his conduct was justifiable, if his motives were good. The lady came to sit for a whole-length portrait, and of course paid half price (seventy five guineas) at the first sitting; she afterwards relinquished her picture, and he then tried to make the most of it by giving it a saleable character. He was so far fortunate, however, that instead of paying for a model, the model paid him. There might, however, have been a little lurking spite at the bottom, because she went to sit to another painter*.

* Since writing the above, I found the following notice of this picture in a pamphlet called the *Ear Wig*; containing remarks on the Exhibition of 1781. The writer does not appear to have been actuated by any hostile feeling towards Sir Joshua, because his observations on the other works of that artist in the same exhibition, are in general highly commendatory.

"Thais—Sir Joshua Reynolds, R. A.—This picture long remained in the painter's gallery, after the first sitting—the face was painted from the famous Emily Bertie, to which the artist has added great animation.—The figure is rushing abroad with a blazing flambeau in one hand, and exciting with the other to the destruction of Persepolis, which is seen in flames—her drapery, the sky, and every thing in the picture, is highly characteristic of such a scene—but incorrect throughout.—It was a cruel *snouch* in the painter; a fine girl having paid him seventy five guineas for an hour's work, and being unable to pay for the other half of her portrait, to exhibit her with such a sarcastic allusion to her private life—to call her Thais—to put a torch in her hand, and direct her attention to set flames to the Temple of Chastity.—Such rigorous punishment seldom is inflicted by a rich man on a pretty woman, *merely* from her want of money—we must therefore search amongst other passions for the reason; although it may be said, that, where avarice predominates, it is the greatest absorbent of the human mind."

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In consequence of Mr. Romney's having this year presented to Miss Seward the portrait of Mr. Hayley, she, inspired by gratitude, wrote a copy of verses; which have since been edited by Sir Walter Scott, but are too long to be inserted here.

In 1781 he also painted the portrait of the learned and pious Doctor Porteus, bishop of Chester; three quarters.

In 1782 he painted a half-length portrait of Capt. Pere Williams, R. N.

A half-length of Lady Augusta Murray, for the Countess Gower.

Also, the Countess of Sutherland.

To gratify Mr. Hayley, he employed his vacant hours about this time in depicting the character of *Serena*, in the Triumphs of Temper. He painted four pictures of her; three representing her reading by candle-light in different attitudes, and the fourth in the Boat of *Apathy*. Of these, one was bought by Lady Gower, one by the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, and two by Mr. Christian Curwen.

In the beginning of 1782 Lady Hamilton, who then passed under the name of Mrs. Hart, first sat to Mr. Romney. She was brought by the Honourable Charles Greville to sit for a three-quarters portrait. It was that beautiful one, so full of *naivete*, in which she is represented with a little spaniel lap dog under her arm. This picture was afterwards bought by Mr. Lister Parker at Sir William Hamilton's sale. Another portrait of her, full-length, in the character of *Circe*, was begun about the same time; it had the same expression of countenance, and was very fascinating; but suffered the fate of many others in never having been finished. The brutes, which the Enchantress had metamorphosed, could not be painted at that time without much personal inconvenience to Mr. Romney; so that the picture was

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set aside. Gilpin was to have painted them afterwards, but from some cause never did. Had any person, however, offered a hundred guineas for it, I have no doubt but it would have been completed.

I cannot enumerate all the pictures which that extraordinary lady sat for; but I will insert here a list of such as I can remember, finished and unfinished; viz. the two first mentioned.

3. *Iphigenia;* whole-length; not finished.

4. *St. Cecilia;* half-length; bought by Mr. Montague Burgoyne for seventy guineas.

5. *Sensibility;* bought by Mr. Hayley for one hundred guineas.

6. *A Bacchante;* half-length; sent to Sir William Hamilton at Naples. The most enchanting of all her portraits. It was, I believe, lost at sea on its return to this country.

7. *Alope* exposed with her child; bought by Admiral Vernon for sixty guineas.

8. *The Spinstress;* bought by Mr. Curwen for one hundred and fifty guineas.

9. *Cassandra;* for the Shakspeare Gallery for one hundred and eighty guineas.

10. A three-quarters in a *Straw Hat* called *Emma;* for Mr. Crawfurd.

11. *A Bacchante;* three-quarters; bought by Sir John Leicester for twenty five guineas. The appropriation of character took place after Sir John had purchased it.

12. A half-length, in a black gown and pink petticoat; sent to Naples.

13. A half-length, painted after she was Lady Hamilton, given at her request to her mother.

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14, 15. Two pictures, a *Calypso,* and a *Magdalene,* painted from her when Lady Hamilton, for the Prince of Wales; two hundred pounds.

16. Whole-length of *Joan of Arc;* unfinished.

17. The *Pythian Priestess;* half-length; unfinished.

18. *Cassandra;* whole-length; unfinished.

19. A half-length, in which she is represented reading a paper, having the light reflected upon her face; given to Mr. Hayley.

20. A three-quarters; sent to Mr. Deutens in 1792.

21, 22, 23. A three-quarters portrait, side-face, shoulders bare—and two Heads now in my possession.

Fortunate would it have been for Lady Hamilton, if she had conducted herself with the same prudence and discretion after she was married to Sir William Hamilton, which distinguished her behaviour while she was the Ἑταιρα of Charles Greville. During the period of six years, while she lived under the protection of the latter, her conduct was in every respect correct, except only the unfortunate situation in which she happened to be placed by the concurrence of peculiar circumstances; such as might, perhaps, in a certain degree, be admitted as an extenuation of that moral transgression. Here is a young female, of an artless and playful character, of extraordinary elegance and symmetry of form, and of a most beautiful countenance glowing with health and animation, turned upon the wide world, without a friend, a protector, or monitor; exposed to the fascinations of gaiety and splendour, and to the artful representations of seducers; with a mind, perhaps, not duly imbued with the principles of morality and religion. Is it to be wondered at, that such a female, under such circumstances, should have been induced to pass the line of virtue? Far be it from me, however, to become her apologist; but as I know

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that her conduct in the former part of her life has been misrepresented, and that many extravagant stories have been told of her, implicating Mr. Romney, which have not the shadow of foundation; it is no more than common charity and justice to state such circumstances as will place her character in its true light. In all Mr. Romney's intercourse with her she was treated with the utmost respect, and her demeanour fully entitled her to it. In the characters in which she has been represented, she only sat for the face, and a slight sketch of the attitude; and the drapery was painted either from other models, or from the layman. The only figure that displayed any licentiousness of dress, was the Bacchante; and it was as modest as the nature of the character would admit of; but in this she only sat for the face. There is no doubt but the talent of representing characters by action, and by the expression of countenance, which she afterwards displayed with so much success when Lady Hamilton, was acquired when she sat to Mr. Romney, she being requested to imitate those powerful emotions of the mind which he wished to paint. It was a great gratification to her, to sit as a model; it amused her, and flattered her vanity. From the peculiarity of her situation she was excluded from society, justly excluded; and the only resources she had for amusement in her loneliness, were reading and music at home, and coming once or twice a week to sit for her picture. She always had a hackney coach to bring, and take her away; and she never appeared in the streets without her mother. She told Mr. Romney that soon after she became acquainted with Mr. Greville, he took her to Ranelagh, where she attracted so much notice, that she perceived it gave him pain; she, therefore, of her own accord, put off her gay attire, and assumed the garb of a lady's maid, in which she ever after appeared, and never again went to any public place.

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At length, when Mr. Greville's circumstances became narrowed, so that he felt himself no longer able to support her as heretofore; it became expedient, notwithstanding his firm attachment, and her good conduct, to devise some honourable means for her decent subsistence. As she had manifested an extraordinary talent for music, and had a fine voice, it was thought that, by proper culture, she might be made a first rate singer. Sir William Hamilton, being then in England, was consulted upon the occasion. He undertook to provide masters for her, and to patronize her, if sent to Naples. All things were accordingly arranged for that purpose, and she was placed under the safe conduct of Gavin Hamilton, the painter, who was then returning to Italy.—The sequel of her story is too well known, and too much interwoven with the history of this country, to need any mention here.

Sometime after Mrs. Hart was gone to Italy, Mr. Curwen offered to purchase the *Spinstress*, but, as it was originally intended for Mr. Greville, Mr. Romney did not feel himself at liberty to sell it till he had first ascertained what were the views of the latter gentleman. He accordingly wrote to Mr. Greville, and informed him of the offer which had been made, and at the same time, also, said, that if he still continued in the intention of purchasing it, he (Mr. Romney) would reserve it for him, and postpone the payment till it might suit Mr. Greville's convenience. Mr. Romney received the following answer.

"Dear Sir,

"Your note requires no apology. I proposed to have answered it in person yesterday, but as the time for your answer to Mr. Christian is so short, I write a line to assure you that my absence from your

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house has not arisen from any relaxation of my regard to you as an amiable and worthy character, or from any less estimation of your professional talents. There are circumstances which force the natural bias of characters, and render it prudent to change the scene of action to train them to necessary sacrifices. The separation from the original of the Spinstress has not been indifferent to me, and I am but just reconciled to it, from knowing that the beneficial consequences of acquirements will be obtained, and that the aberration from the plan I intended will be for her benefit. I therefore can have no reason to value the Spinstress less than I have done, on the contrary the just estimation of its merits is ascertained by the offer from a person who does not know the original; yet I find myself daily so much poorer, that I do not foresee when I can pay for it, and I am already too much obliged to you to avail myself in any degree of your kindness to me:—perhaps Mr. Christian might accept my resignation of it and pay for it, and give me the option of repurchasing if the improbable event of my increase of means shall enable me to recover what I now lose with regret; but I can make no condition, and I leave the full and entire disposal of it to you; and I am,

"Dear Sir, with great regard,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"C. F. GREVILLE."

February 25th, 1788.

Mr. Curwen acceded to the terms, on the condition that Mr. Romney would undertake at some convenient opportunity to paint another picture to be ready to replace the Spinstress; and Mr. Greville then wrote as follows.

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To George Romney, Esq.

"Dear Sir,

"You may suppose that I consider the resolution which you had taken about the Spinstress as a flattering mark of your friendship and disinterestedness.—This opportunity was not wanting to give me experience of your liberal mind; but I could not with satisfaction to myself repeatedly benefit by your sacrifices, and I wrote to Mr. Christian that I might multiply the objects of expectation from better times by keeping hold of the Spinstress without postponing the payment.—Mr. Christian consents to take the Spinstress and pay for it, and engages to return it to me on demand, and on repayment of the price he pays you; and also Mr. Christian joins a condition, which is proof of his deserving the temporary possession of the Spinstress; that Mr. Romney, at some convenient time, will replace the Spinstress, when he shall lose her, by another painting.—I dare say this arrangement will be agreeable to you. It is satisfactory to me, and although in this instance the intended sacrifice will not be made, be assured I feel my obligation to you, as sincerely as if your intentions had been executed;

"And I remain, your obliged friend and servant,

"C. F. GREVILLE."

I have thought it proper to insert these letters, both to shew under what circumstances the Spinstress came into the possession of Mr. Curwen, so honourable to all the parties concerned; and also to confirm my former observations respecting the feelings and conduct of Mr. Greville in parting with Mrs. Hart.

When Mr. Romney visited Eartham in the autumn of 1782, he must have felt more than usual gratification in the elegant society of some

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accomplished females whom he met there. It was then, and there, that he first painted the portrait of Miss Seward, who was one of the party. The following copies of verses, dictated by gratified feelings, good humour, and social hilarity, shew at once the pleasantry and character of the company. They are all in the manuscript of Miss Seward; the two former, however, are evidently the productions of Mr. Hayley's muse, and may be ranked among the best of his sportive effusions. Those by Miss Seward have already been before the public, with several alterations: I have deemed it proper, however, to insert them here in their original state, as being more of an extemporary character.

SONNET,

To Julia on the morning of her departure.

"Farewell dear visitant! again farewell!
Friendship reluctant yields the radient guest,
Who shed new splendour on the sylvan cell,
Who gave to pleasure's cup a richer zest.
Still let thy bard, tho' in this morn deprest,
Strike on his sadden'd lyre one kind adieu,
And fondly bid the Fugitive be blest
With vows of amity, tho' plaintive, true!
O blest be every path thy feet pursue,
And blest these spirit soothing arts, whose power
Fix thee forever in affection's view
To rob of half its pain the parting hour;
Thy form we keep by Romney's soft controul,
And in thy living verse possess thy soul.

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To Miss Seward, on her being at Eartham in the variable Weather of August, 1782.

"Whence are these storms? an angry poet cried,
Who saw his shady summer haunts defaced,
Saw o'er his shatter'd grove, black whirlwinds ride,
And deeply mourn'd the unseasonable waste.

He spoke, and Œolus uprear'd his head,
Half his huge form, round which dark clouds were driven,
Rising from Ocean's broad and billowy bed,
Fill'd up the vast expanse from earth to heaven.

As his fierce eye survey'd the rough profound,
From the stern God the voice of anger broke,
Air, earth, and sea reverberate the sound,
And shrinking nature shudder'd as he spoke:

"Know thou, vain bard, within thy mansion dwells
The wondrous source of all this wild uproar,
Thence round my cave the din of discord swells,
And I my rebel offspring rule no more.

To own my laws my madd'ning sons refuse,
All, all are deaf to my paternal power,
Struggling alike to kiss that vagrant Muse,
Who deigns to visit thy sequester'd bower.

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Rough Boreas, us'd in these still months to sleep,
Starts from his cell, in passion's wild alarms,
While dripping Auster rushes from the deep
To snatch the fair-one from his brother's arms.

Each others fond ambition to destroy
Alike they struggle, merciless as death;
See my young Zephyr, nature's tender joy,
Encounter Eurus with contentious breath!

Cease my rash sons, this cruel war to wage,
Tho' tempting beauty gave your conflict birth,
Lest Famine waken'd by your frantic rage,
Stalk in fell triumph o'er the blasted earth.

See shivering mortals mourn th' inverted year,
While Ceres weeps, her golden pride deprest,
If ye no longer nature's laws revere,
Yet mildly listen to your sire's request.

Let each in order taste the tempting bliss,
For which these mutual wounds ye vainly bear,
Each unmolested take one precious kiss,
And freely clasp this phrenzy-kindling fair."

He paus'd:—black Boreas eldest of his race,
Whose stormy passion the chill maiden shocks,
Binds her reluctant in his strong embrace,
And sports licentious in her auburne locks.

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Eurus succeeds; of less disgusting mien,
Yet mad the trembling fair-one to assail,
Beneath his pressure, more intensely keen,
The wounded ruby of her lip grows pale.

Next with mild charms, and less tumultuous love,
By melting Auster see the nymph carest;
He with the softness of the murm'ring dove
Waves his moist pinions o'er her softer breast.

Now, lively Zephyr, the sweet Muse is thine,
O long embrace her in our laughing skies!
And round her bid this joyous landscape shine,
Rich as her verse, and radient as her eyes!

Miss Seward's verses on leaving Eartham.

September 4th, 1782.

"Tomorrow's dawn must bring th' unwelcome hour,
When my reluctant spirit's fond farewell
Shall mourn in sighs through Eartham's beauteous bower,
The vanish'd pleasures of the sylvan cell.

The torpid gloom of future days to chace,
On these dear scenes the tender thought shall dwell,
And memory restore each lovely grace
That decks their radient hill or dusky dell.

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The full luxuriance of yon sloping wood
  Circling the golden mead with pomp of shade;
And, where soft comfort's downy pinions brood,
  The village bosom'd in the blooming glade.

The path umbrageous up the steepy side
  Of this sweet mount, where varied beauty glows;
While, in bold curves the forest's lofty pride,
  Dark on th' opposing hill's high summit, flows.

Then as the grassy eminence ascends,
  The champaign glories bursting on the sight,
Where far and wide the dazzling vale extends
  Clos'd by the distant main that rolls in light.

Groves *half* as fair as these may meet my eye,
  Thy bowers, O Litchfield, lovely scenes afford;
But ah! what keen regrets shall wake the sigh
  To miss the pleasures of the Haylean board!

Where, as his *pencil*, Romney's *soul* sublime
  Glows with bold lines, original and strong;
While Fanny's* lays and kindred spirit chime
  With fair Eliza's† wit, and sparkling song.

To the dear Bard, our master spring of joy,
  How shall I grateful breathe the soft farewell?
Yet long thy generous kindness shall employ
  The heart it gladden'd in thy sylvan cell."

* Miss Heron, of Portsmouth. † Mrs. Hayley.

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In the Autumn of this year (1782) he began his own portrait, which he afterwards gave to Mr. Hayley; who did not allow him to finish it, but hurried it off to Eartham without delay. The head, however, is perfect, but the rest of the figure, which could not be completed without a model, remains in *statu quo*. Had it, however, been suffered to remain in Cavendish Square sometime longer, an opportunity would have occurred when it might have been finished;—but Mr. Hayley preferred the bird in hand.

When a painter paints himself, he must necessarily be represented as looking attentively; but in this picture Mr. Romney appears, also, in a serious and thoughtful mood, as if he felt himself in the solemn act of consigning to posterity a memorial of his personal form and existence. It is an uncommonly fine head, extremely like, and full of character; any physiognomist, who saw it, would say; "that is the head of a man of genius;" and if he was a connoiseur, would add; "and he that painted it, must also have been one of the highest class." He was forty eight, when he painted it.

Some serious reflections in contemplating this portrait, gave birth to the following Sonnet, which being expressive of my feelings I have presumed to insert here.

SONNET,

To my Father's Portrait, painted by himself.

Semblance exact of Him, who erst had skill
To stay the wasting hand of time, and save
The living form of life, while in the grave
The sad remains their destin'd lot fulfil—

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When I behold thee thus, unchanged still,
In musing mood, and with an aspect grave,
I could almost with pleasing rapture rave
At the fond sight; till sad reflections fill
My soul with grief. O hours of past delight
For ever gone! When I beheld his hand
Dash on the canvass with creative might
Visions of fancy, as by magic wand!
Picture, nine lustrums now have quickly passed by
Since first I saw thee thus—Alas! how chang'd am I!

He painted about this time, (1783,) the two Miss Thurlows.
Lady Brownlow and Master Cust.
Lady Georgiana Smith and child.
The two Miss Kents, daughters of Sir Charles Kent.
The Earl of Derby, whole-length, with a horse; for Mr. Stevenson.

And a half-length portrait of Gibbon, for Mr. Hayley. This is a very fine picture, but I remember being dissatisfied with what I thought savoured of affectation—a viciousness in design into which Mr. Romney's correct feeling never suffered him to be seduced—it was, the *pointing of the finger;* which I endeavoured to account for by attributing it to a peculiar habit of the sitter. I have since, however, met with a passage in Dante, which has entirely satisfied me with respect to the propriety of that action.

"Ed ora attendi qui, e drizzò 'l dito*."

" * Gesto che dimostra che Virgilio voleva dire qualche notabile cosa."

Dell' Inferno.—Cant 10.

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This year, also, he painted the portraits of Lord Chatham and Mr. Pitt, kit-cat size; the first, if not both, for the Reverend Mr. Wilson, Lord Chatham's tutor. The latter remained many years in his gallery with the head only finished. It was the finest head ever painted of Pitt, both for strength of character, and individual similitude. It was nearly a front face, which rendered it more difficult to catch the likeness; but when taken, made it more pleasing; as the *angularities*, which appeared in his profile, and of which the caricaturists used frequently to avail themselves, were thus softened down. It had, also, that erect dignity, which distinguished his person. The original price was thirty guineas: Mr. Romney received fifty pounds for it, but from whom I do not know. A very indifferent mezzotinto print, in which Mr. Pitt was represented half-length, in the robes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was taken from this head, by Jones. I am sorry to say that this bad engraver was too much privileged by Mr. Romney in making prints from his pictures. He was, however, strongly patronized by George Stevens, the Shakspeare editor; and Mr. Romney was unwilling to give offence by any refusal.

In 1784 he painted the portrait of David Hartley, Minister Plenipotentiary for settling the terms of peace with America. I notice this picture on account of its excellence. Though the canvass is only half-length, yet, as he is represented sitting, the whole person is nearly introduced. He fronts the spectator, at whom he looks through his spectacles. There is great strength and precision in the character of the head, which imply correct similitude; and much sober dignity in the attitude altogether: the dress, also, is painted in a masterly style, with great facility and freedom of penciling.

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About this time, also, he painted a half-length portrait of Mrs. Russel with her child, (the late wife of the present Sir Henry.) The child, as far as I recollect, was held on a table, facing a looking-glass, and its portrait reflected from the mirror. Its position with respect to the glass, was not unlike that of the portrait of Caravaggio painted by himself; I do not, however, think that Mr. Romney was aware of this similitude; otherwise, he would have mentioned it to me when I expressed my approbation of the idea.

The Right Reverend Doctor Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury; half-length; in the robes of the garter.

Doctor Farmer, master of Emanuel College, Cambridge; three-quarters.

In 1785 he painted a charming half-length portrait of a Mrs. Smith, in the character of a *Wood-Nymph*, for Sir Simeon Stuart. The lady, six years after, (then called Mrs. Selby,) paid the remaining price and received the picture. I mention these particulars, in hopes that it may be traced and identified. She was represented sitting on the ground, and playing on a flageolet; her hair hung beautifully over her forehead in spiral ringlets, and her drapery was of a pink colour, simple and elegant, after the Grecian style.

Though it was the fashion during the greatest part of Mr. Romney's practice, for ladies to wear high head dresses, and stiff long-waisted stays; yet, whenever he had an opportunity, and the style and disposition of the drapery were left to his own taste, he rid himself of those ungraceful incumbrances, and returned to nature and truth.—His picture of Cassandra, in the Shakspeare Gallery, influenced the public taste, and was instrumental in expelling from the empire of fashion, the long and shapeless waist; and in introducing

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a more simple and graceful mode of dress, approaching nearer to the Grecian. The succeeding painters have enjoyed all the advantage of this reform in female attire, which gives to their portraits much elegance, without their being obliged to have recourse to fancy designs; whereas many of the finest pictures, both by Sir Joshua, and Mr. Romney, are disfigured by the preposterous fashions of the day.

This year he painted the portrait of Miss Shakespear, which has already been mentioned. While she was his sitter, he received the following verses by the penny-post; evidently written by an admirer of that beautiful lady.

To Mr. Romney.

"How great thy art, O Romney, to portray
Nature's fair form,—to catch the subtle ray
That plays in beauty's eye—to give a grace
To every feature of the female face!
But when a Shakespear's seated in thy Chair,
As angels lovely, and as Venus fair;
When with the charms of beauty are combin'd
The rare endowments of a virtuous mind;
Vain are thy efforts, vain thy cunning art,
To trace the virtues which adorn her heart.
Sweet smiles and dimples may obey thy will,
But mental graces are beyond thy skill."

October 17th, 1785. U. B.

The following excellent verses, seem to have been written about this time, or sooner, and one might suppose, from the initials in the

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signature, that they were the production of Mr. Richard Paine Knight's elegant pen.

To G. Romney, Esq. R. A.

"Thy pictures raise no doubt when brought to view,
At once they're known, and seem to know us too.
Transcendent artist! how complete thy skill!
Thy power to act is equal to thy will.
Nature and art in thee alike contend
Not to oppose each other, but befriend;
For what thy Fancy has with Fire design'd,
Is by thy skill both temper'd and refin'd;
As in thy pictures *light* consents with *shade*,
And each to other is subservient made;
Judgment and genius so concur in thee
And both unite in perfect harmony."

R. K.

The following Sonnet bears the stamp of Mr. Hayley's mint.

"Ætherial Beings! who benignly bright,
In finest toil the hand of skill inspire,
And by the impulse of celestial fire,
(When fervent genius with aspiring flight
Calls forth new forms, to fascinate the sight,
Firm as fixt love, or soft as young desire,)
Kindly forbid the high strained nerve to tire,
Making the labour of creation light:
Here round your favourite Romney fondly sport!
Inspirit here the artist and the friend;

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While infancy's sweet charms his pencil court,
On his rich canvass all attractions blend!
Let his rare powers of mind and heart combine,
Exquisite art and amity divine!"

In 1785 he painted another three-quarters portrait of Edmund Burke; but for whom I do not know.

Mrs. Boughton Rouse and child; whole-length.

Lady Belgony and Master Belgony; kit-cat.

Mrs. Ford and child; half-length; for Governor Johnstone.

Mrs. and Miss Beresford; half-length.

Mrs. Thomas Raikes and child; half-length.

It is not easy to give a precise date to fancy subjects, because they were generally painted at stolen intervals; but the two pictures of *The Seamstress,* and *Absence,* were painted about this period; the former was sold to Admiral Vernon, and the other remains with me; both were distinguished by a simple and unaffected grace.

In 1786 he painted the two sons of Mr. Wilbraham Bootle.

Mrs. Smith and child, whole-length; sent to Carolina.

The Ladies Caroline and Elizabeth Spencer, daughters of the Duke of Marlborough.

A half-length portrait of Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle; for his son Mr. Edward Law (Lord Ellenborough.) This was a remarkably fine picture, in which the learned and venerable prelate was represented without his robes. Mr. Romney had painted two former portraits of his lordship; one for Sir Thomas Rumbold, in 1777, and the other in 1783, for his son Dr. John Law, Bishop of Clonfort. It may be mentioned here for the honour of Lancashire, that Dr. Law was born at

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Buckcrag, in Cartmel, about fifteen miles from Mr. Romney's birth place: most likely this circumstance would be a pleasing source of conversation during the sittings, and revive many agreeable associations, which would give complacency to the sitter, and energy to the painter.

The portrait of Mrs. Jordan in the character of the *Country Girl;* bought by the Duke of Clarence.

In 1787 he painted a half-whole-length portrait of Bishop Watson. The delightful conversational talents of this learned divine must have given, I have no doubt, an impulse to the genius of the painter; for certainly a finer portrait was never produced: it was, indeed, perfect in every respect. It had likewise, the advantage of being painted without the formal robes of a Bishop, which are any thing but picturesque. The Bishop and Mr. Romney were nearly of the same age, and came from the same neighbourhood.

Mrs. Ainslie and child; three-quarters.

Mrs. Billington, half-length; now in my possession.

In 1788 he painted a half-length portrait of Mrs. Clements, which was sent to Dublin. I mention it here, on account of a peculiarity which I do not remember to have observed in any other of his pictures:—it was painted in a beautiful pearly tone.

Mrs. Arden and child, half-length.

A three-quarters portrait of the Reverend Doctor Parr, the celebrated scholar and controversialist, in his Doctor's gown.

Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cumberland; half-length.

The sons of Sir George Winn; half-whole-length.

Doctor Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury; half-length.

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The Reverend John Westley, the celebrated preacher; three-quarters; for Mrs. Tyghe and sent to Ireland.

The portrait of Miss Wallis in the character of *Mirth and Melancholy*. Melancholy is represented near the entrance of a gloomy cell, urged with gentle force by her sister Mirth to join a joyous party dancing round a maypole on a distant hill—this picture remains with me.

The three children of Mr. Gosling, in one piece.

The Spaniel dog of the Duchess of Richmond, already mentioned.

To George Romney, Esq.

IMPROMPTU.

"Thou, who hast given a portion of those hours
That genius crowns with all her lavish powers,
Given them the heart of failing age to warm
By the wish'd semblance of a daughter's form,
Accept, the sole reward thy efforts sought,
Proof of the lively pleasure it has brought.
Creative efforts! they in living hues,
Fix the illusive likeness, and diffuse
O'er all the breathing form, and glowing face,
With art's *last* happiness, the nameless grace;
Grace, that perchance coy nature's niggard boon
Refus'd in youth's fresh morn, or ripen'd noon.
Long since within my father's feeble breast
Life's anxious train of wishes sank to rest;
Yet *one* remain'd, one fond wish linger'd still;—
The promis'd gift of thy consummate skill.
"O my Belov'd," how often would he say,
"Fast as my worn existence fleets away,

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Life's prov'd uncertainty to blooming health,
May rob my soul of all its earthly wealth;
Childless I yet to my late grave may go,
Where tears that mourn thy loss shall only cease to flow.
'Twere comfort still to know, should heaven ordain
My helpless years to feel so sharp a pain,
Something may yet to my dim eyes appear,
That shall that look, that smile of comfort wear,
With which thou com'st to cheer through the long day
Decrepit age amid its 'lorn decay."
The shades of yesternight were softly drawn
Wide o'er these blooming bowers and circling lawn,
The full of days his downy pillow prest,
In the soft slumber of an infant's rest.
Two wondrous youths, who strike the Delian lyre,
Ere manhood's hour, with all the poet's fire,
Sat by thy friend in luxury of praise,
A raptur'd descant on Hayleyan lays;
When sudden thro' the swiftly open'd door
The long wish'd prize a smiling servant bore.
With eager eyes the youthful poets hail
The heav'd dismission of each tardy nail,
Till to the sight thy breathing canvass shone
And made the magic of thy pencil known.
At early morn to the dear couch I creep
And chace with lenient voice a father's sleep,
Then near his pillow draw his heart's desire;—
Mark his pale cheek light ting'd by pleasure's fire,

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Enjoy his warm apostrophe to thee,
And his now *seldom* tear of ecstasy.
Illustrious Romney! whose expansive heart
Glows the blest rival of thy perfect art;
That art is as a *Sun*, and shines serene
On the chill surface of a wintry scene;
Pale waning life smiles in its cheering ray
And I to its kind light a Brahmin's homage pay."

"ANNA SEWARD."

Lichfield, May 31st, 1788.

"The above verses have faintly, and with little happiness expressed my father's sense, and my own, of the very great obligation you have conferred upon us: neither verse nor prose can express *how* affectionately we shall always be,

"My dear Mr. Romney,

"Your devoted admirers and grateful friends,

"THOMAS AND ANNA SEWARD."

"Every body here, who, as yet, have seen the picture, think it still more pleasing than the first, and more like me from having that smile, which *they say* is habitual to my countenance—also from the hair being more gracefully disposed—of the likeness I must leave other people to judge—but of the exquisite excellence as a portrait, supposing I knew nothing of the original, I cannot but be conscious. While we expected this treasure of genius, the ensuing verse, in one of Shenstone's ever beautiful, though *now* neglected elegies, used often to occur to me."

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"And you, ye works of art, allur'd mine eye
The breathing picture, and the living stone;
Tho' gold, tho' splendour, heaven and fate deny,
Yet may I call one Titian stroke my own!"

"Once more adieu."

From Mr. Romney's acquaintance with the elder Flaxman, he had frequent opportunities of observing the promising talents of his son, and said, and did every thing in his power to fan the growing enthusiasm of the young sculptor, whose designs on paper were even then, spirited and full of *gusto*. Mr. Romney saw with a prophet's eye his future eminence, and with this conviction upon his mind, felt an uncommon interest in his success. Having himself, though unfortunately late in life, experienced the great advantage to be derived from studying the works of the ancient Greek sculptors, and also those of Michael Angelo; he recommended to the young sculptor, by all means to visit Italy, and to fix himself in Rome for a length of time, where he might enjoy every facility of study, and where every thing that was great, or graceful in art, would be accessible to his genius: he did more—he offered to be useful to him in a pecuniary light, or in any way that might promote his professional views.

The two following letters, besides bearing testimony to the moral worth of Mr. Flaxman, and justifying the partiality of Mr. Romney; will convey to the liberal and enlightened reader a high degree of gratification, from their unaffected and pleasing style, the grateful feeling that pervades them, and from the interesting information which they communicate, both with respect to that celebrated sculptor himself, and concerning works of art in general.

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Rome, May 25th, 1788.

"Dear Sir,

"Although I have not written to you before this time, you have been no less present to my thoughts than when I was in England; and if you will permit me to use so familiar an expression, I can say with truth, my dear friend Romney will always occupy one of the first places in my mind, as well for his talents and virtues, as for the obligations I am under to him. I hope you will not doubt what I say, and yet I think you will excuse me for not writing before, considering where I am, and how I have been employed; for, since I have been in Italy, the first three months was spent in seeing works of art, and making a few drawings; and since that time, in settling myself in lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, where Clarisseau formerly lived, in Cunego's house, getting a study to work in, and in arranging my pursuits. I am at present making a copy in clay of the bas relief on the Borghese vase, the figures one foot high, for Mr. Knight, who I am sure will be happy to shew it to you, when I send it to England. I am besides making designs and models for a group of my own composition, the subjects of these sketches are various; in the mean time I study nature, and the fine forms of the Antique. Excuse my vanity for telling you my drawings have surprised some of the best English artists here, who thought they were copied from the stories on Greek vases. I am also copying some drawings from the frieze in the temple of Minerva at Athens. Now you will expect some slight account of what I have seen. I have been at Pœstum and seen the three fine temples of the ancient Doric order in that city; they are in better preservation than any ancient temple in Rome, except the Pantheon. The idea of each of these buildings is so simple, the larger parts so truly great, the small members done with so much feeling and delicacy that my mind was filled

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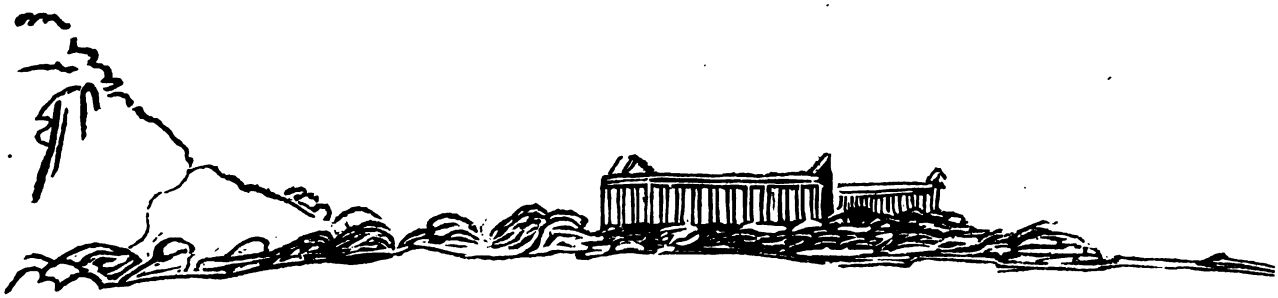
with the sublime of architecture. If you have not seen this place the sketch beneath will convey an idea of the first view I had of it; the wall of the city is still entire, and over one of the gates is the figure of a



Syren in bas relief; the age of this place is the same with the Etruscan vases in the museum, and they are both the works of Greek colonies, who settled on this coast of Italy. The museum of Portici has had no great things added to it since you was in Italy. I will be more particular in the description of what I saw in this neighbourhood when we meet, when I will also shew you sketches from some of the principal buildings at Pompeia. You will naturally suppose how much I was wrapt in fancy when I saw the Phlegrean plains, where the giants were said to be overthrown by the thunder of Jupiter; the island of the Syrens; the situations of Herculaneum and Pompeia, with the Elysian fields at one view; and walked on the same ground where Homer, Plato, and Pythagoras had been; as well as those venerable professors of the arts of design, whose steps I humbly endeavour to follow. But I must now tell you the news of Rome, which is most interesting. Mr. Hawkins is returned to Rome from his tour of Greece; he is an honour to mankind in great qualities, and the most valuable acquired accomplishments; he informs me, a French artist whom he was ac-

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quainted with at Athens, has moulded the frieze of the temple of Minerva in that city, and sent them to Paris, where they are arrived I believe by this time; they are to be placed in the Royal Academy. This is an invaluable acquisition to all the northern part of Europe. There is a report that the artist who made these casts, will also bring casts of the finest pieces with him to this city in his return to France. I am concerned to tell you that the noble group of the Toro went to Naples about three weeks ago, and the Duke of Tuscany is removing all the statues, granite basons, and the obelisk from the gardens of the Villa Medicis to Florence; but to make some amends for these losses the Pope is continually adding some valuable piece of art to his museum. It is not possible in the compass of a letter to give any account of particulars, I can only observe that in rooms built of fine architecture, and the richest marbles, with pavements of the finest Mosaics with figures historical, theatrical, &c., all of antique workmanship, here are to be seen, groups, statues, busts, bas reliefs, and therms innumerable, of the most wonderful productions of art, together with many animals, and fragments of animals broken from statues, the size of nature; as heads of bulls, cows, horses, camels, elks, rhinoceroses, mules, asses, and whole statues of lions, goats, and other inferior animals, which give an unlucky contradiction to those wise connoisseurs, who assert that the ancients did not represent animals well; for these are every thing but alive. You have seen the Etruscan vases and the other curiosities of this museum. I must mention excellent news for the arts in England. Colonel Campbell is returning, and brings with him to London three hundred Etruscan vases, many adorned with the finest historical paintings; and a collection of all the plaister casts from the finest antiques he could purchase in Italy. You know by this time Sir Richard Worsley is returned with several valuable bas reliefs he got in Greece, and engravings as well

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as the original drawings by Pars of the frieze of the temple of Minerva at Athens. I could say much concerning the manner my mind has been affected by the fine things I have seen here, but I hope this will be better explained by my future works. Permit me now to hope you, Mr. Hayley, and Mr. Long have been in perfect health since I left England; my Nancy and myself talk of you continually, and remember how much we are obliged for such *rare friends*. I shall write to Mr. Hayley soon, and I am sorry I cannot write to all my friends as much as I wish: but I find myself more and more immersed every day in such studies as are necessary to make me a good artist. Pray permit me to beg of you when you see my Father to give my duty to him and my Mother, and love to my Sister; tell him I have wrote to him lately, and I will write again before it's long. Pray accept the best wishes of my Nancy and myself, and believe me, with all gratitude for your several instances of friendship, to remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obliged and faithful servant,

"JOHN FLAXMAN, JUNR."

"Letters are directed to me, to the care of Mr. Jenkins, Rome, but I know how your time is engaged, and do not expect an answer."

Rome, April 15th, 1790.

"Dear Sir,

"I take the advantage of Mr. Bunce's return to England, to repeat my thanks to you for the many singular instances of friendship I have received from your kindness; and I hope you will believe whatever distance of time or place may separate us, they can never diminish my high respect for your character, and gratitude for your good of-

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fices; and believe me I am equally solicitous for your happiness in all particulars as if I was present to be a sharer in it. Most likely you will have heard before this time that my return to my own country will be delayed two years and a half longer than I intended; but in order that you may not be misinformed concerning the cause of my stay, I will mention some of the particulars. I had settled my affairs for my departure from Rome, I had given orders for packing cases to be made for the works I have done here, and I had received earnest from the coachman who was to carry us to Lyons, as you know is the custom of this country; and in order that the time of seeing my dear friends and country might not be prolonged, I refused to execute a bust in marble for one gentleman and a marble bas relief for another. Whilst I was thus rejoicing with my Nancy in the near approach of the time, which would bring us back to people whom we loved so much; all our schemes were overset in the following manner. One morning Lord Bristol called to see what I have done here, and ordered me to carve in marble for him, a bas relief I have modelled here, between eight and nine feet, and near five feet high; representing Amphion and Zethus delivering their mother Antiope from the fury of Dirce and Lycus: it is my own composition, taken from a different point of time, but the same story as the group of the Toro Farnese, which you well know. I refused this work notwithstanding the price would have been five hundred guineas, and informed his lordship I could not possibly remain longer here, unless I should be employed to execute a work that might establish my reputation as a sculptor. His lordship applauded my resolution, and immediately ordered me to execute a group in marble, the figures as large as the Gladiator, from a sketch in clay which I had made; the subject of which is, the Madness of Athamas, in which he believes his wife Ino to be a tigress, and her children her whelps; when after

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coursing them round the hall, he seizes the youngest from its mother's breast, and throws it on the ground. The story is in Ovid's Metamorphosis, and the group consists of Athamas, Ino, and two small children. Mr. Bunce, the gentleman who does me the favour to present this letter, was my most esteemed friend in Rome, both for the excellence of his moral character, and his abilities in architecture; he was present when that noble patron of arts, the generous Lord Bristol gave me a draft in writing for the payment of my work, which I am to receive as I may have occasion for it; and also when his lordship promised me every assistance and encouragement that I can possibly want. As my friend Mr. Bunce was present on this occasion, he can inform you of all the particulars relating to that transaction, as well as every other particular relating to me and my dear Nancy, who upon this occasion has behaved with the most heroic virtue; for when I consulted her concerning whether I should accept this commission, and whether, having settled her mind to return to England, she should not be unhappy to remain longer here? She answered, I should be my own enemy if I refused the noblest work that could be offered to a sculptor, and that she should accommodate her mind to my fortune. Forgive my vanity in telling you that I was particularly recommended in this work to Lord Bristol by Mr. Canova, who has done the monuments of two Popes, and other excellent works, and is esteemed here the best sculptor in Europe. Pray remember me in the most grateful and affectionate manner to Mr. Long, and Mr. Hayley: I lately troubled those gentlemen with letters, and I hope they have received them. You will forgive me for not writing oftener and better; you know how much the studies of an artist ought to engage his mind.

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"My Nancy continually unites with me in earnest wishes for your prosperity and happiness in all things; and I remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Your most obliged

"And faithful servant,

"JOHN FLAXMAN."

As further proofs of Mr. Romney's liberality and disinterestedness in the exercise of his profession, I feel myself justified in inserting the two following letters from the Honourable Charles Greville.

"My dear Sir,

"I have been desired to enquire if you have had any payment for the pictures sent to Naples; I am sure it is high time that there should be some; if you will be so good as to send me a memorandum of what is due, I will make Sir William Hamilton's agent pay you; and I will also discharge my share.—Sir William made me a present of his portrait, and I gave him mine, which is now at Naples; and I have kept only the Head with a Straw Hat from Emma. You will therefore include in Sir William's note, his portrait and all the pictures sent to Naples, except my portrait, which with the Straw Hat, you will charge to me. I wish I could have completed all my plans, I should not restrict myself to two of your works; and as I have speculated deeply to be proprietor of a house, and cannot look to the occupation of it above a year, after which I shall be obliged to let it, I shall beg to have Sir William Hamilton's picture to hang up. I shall be happy to see you in my new habitation, which I hope to clear of workmen in a fortnight. I shall send my servant, with your leave, to prove the deep cellar in which you kindly let me deposit some wine from Portman Square. If I am not more lucky than in my

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other cellar, I shall begin house-keeping with a very reduced stock, as very little has proved good; probably owing to the unequal temperature of the air, from which I think your cellar is safe.

"I heard last week from Mrs. Hart, she desired me to tell you that she hoped to captivate you by her voice next spring, and that few things interest her more than the remembrance which you and Mr. Hayley honour her with.

"Believe me, dear Sir, with real esteem,

"Your obliged and faithful servant,

"C. J. GREVILLE."

Oxford Street, Augt. 8th, 1788.

"Dear Sir,

"I enclose an order for one hundred pounds, and have informed Sir William of the very disinterested and friendly part you chose to act in the settling his account; as to myself, the portraits which in themselves are interesting to me, become more so, from the manner in which you deposit them with me, and I shall value them as ostensible marks of your friendship; and shall not be less mindful of other instances of your attention and kindness to me, but shall at all times embrace any opportunity which may offer to prove how sincerely

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obliged friend and humble servant.

"C. J. GREVILLE."

18th August, 1788.

Among the pictures painted in 1789, were the following;—A full length portrait of the beautiful, but frail Mrs. Hodges, for Walkier, the celebrated Brussels banker. Her attitude was a good deal similar

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to that of Colonel Tarleton in Reynold's fine portrait of that officer. She was represented, if I rightly remember, with her back towards the spectator, and stooping to tye her shoe-string, having her countenance retrospective. It was a most delightful picture, but never had the advantage of being exhibited to the view of admiring Englishmen; for it was sent to Brussels before the French revolution. What became of it, and its wealthy possessor, when the French invaded Flanders, I have never heard; but I hope it had the good fortune to be restored to this country.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, three-quarters; and also, half-whole-length.

A three-quarters picture of Master Hayley in the character of *Robin Good-fellow*; conceived with much poetic fancy, and beautifully painted.

Mr. Edward Law, three-quarters, (Lord Ellenborough.)

Mr. Adye's children, in one piece.

The Revd. Doctor Paley, half-whole-length. This excellent portrait would be a good companion to that of Bishop Watson. I should like to see the latter adorn the walls of Trinity College, and Paley's those of Christ's, Cambridge; societies to which the originals have respectively done so much honour. Paley is represented with his fishing-rod in his hand, indicating his attachment to a contemplative amusement, not inconsistent with the sacred functions of his profession. When the Doctor first came to sit, he was accompanied by Doctor Law, the Bishop of Clonfert; and, being a man that disregarded externals, his dress was not the most suitable for a picture; he was, therefore, prevailed with to put on the Bishop's hat, and, I believe, his coat also*.

* In the Life of Doctor Paley (prefixed to the works of that learned divine and philosopher recently published by his son) is the following observation respecting this portrait, which conveying a reflection on Mr. Romney, ought not to be passed over in silence.—"It was

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Two Miss Beckfords, half-whole-length.

The Earl of Westmorland, half-whole-length, for Emanuel College, Cambridge.

In 1790 he painted Doctor Fowler, Archbishop of Dublin, half-whole-length.

A half-length portrait of Doctor Markham, Archbishop of York. This was a picture of uncommon merit, and inferior to none by any master. His Grace was in like manner, painted without his robes, which gave additional simplicity and naturalness to the character. When Mr. Romney painted dignified characters, it was always his wish, if left to his own choice, to exclude from their dress all formal appendages of rank and profession; and to invest them with simplicity and grandeur. This was the reason why he preferred painting Bishops without their robes, and Doctors Watson and Paley with hats on. He began a full-length portrait of the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, with a hat on, for Colonel Johnes of Hafod. But the latter gentleman's circumstances becoming embarrassed, Mr. Romney was not pressed to finish it, and the picture remained in that

thought so good a painting, that when Doctor Law, then Bishop of Clonfert, called on Romney to pay him the stipulated price, the painter took up his fifty pounds with great dissatisfaction, at the same time observing, he had been offered twice as much for it." From whatever source Mr. Paley has derived his information, it certainly is not true. Mr. Romney received sixty guineas for it from Mr. Edward Law (Lord Ellenborough) on the 6th of April, 1791, which was the price of a picture of that size at the time Doctor Paley began to sit, viz. July 10th, 1789. Mr. Romney advanced his prices on the first of the following October to seventy guineas. As this interval was so very short, and during the summer recess, it is not improbable that Mr. Romney might, inadvertently, have expected the latter price, not recollecting the precise time when the Doctor first came to sit; and, having taken great pains with it, and it being esteemed a most excellent portrait, it would, perhaps, have been no more than a just compliment, if he had been paid seventy guineas. I am sure that Mr. Romney was perfectly incapable of making any charge which he did not at the time think just.

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state at his death. The head, however, was afterwards sold to the Colonel. I may mention here, as another proof of Mr. Romney's disinterestedness with respect to money, that when he began to paint the great family-picture for Colonel Johnes, that gentleman offered then to pay the whole price, three hundred guineas, and pressed him to take it; but he declined receiving more than half, and the remainder was not paid till after Mr. Romney's death.

A half-length picture, containing the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Drax Grosvenor and child, in oval, was painted this year.

Mrs. Bonner and child, half-whole-length.

While Mr. Romney was engaged in painting the large picture of *The Tempest*, he, to avoid the frequent interruption of callers, had instructed his servant to deny him to all who did not come expressly on business. It happened that Mr. Cumberland, who on former occasions had generally been admitted into his private painting-room as a privileged friend, having come to town about this time, paid his accustomed visit; but was refused along with the rest. When this circumstance became known to Mr. Romney, he was exceedingly sorry, and desired me to write to him, and apologize. The following letter was in answer; and, as it chiefly refers to the above named picture, I have taken the liberty to insert it here.

Tunbridge Wells;
Sunday 18th April, 1790.

"To the Revd. John Romney,

"Dear Sir,

"I beg you will assure your worthy father of the perfect sense I have of his kindness, and at the same time of the little need there was to make any thing like an excuse for his forbearance, whilst he was en-

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gaged in so interesting a work as the completion of his great composition for the Shakspeare Gallery.

"When he indulged me with a sight of that noble work he effectually forestalled every occasion for an apology to his friends, if any of them could be stupid enough to stand in need of any explanation of the cause of his sequestering himself from the distractions of company. He has done enough to justify himself to the most captious and querulential, if any such can be found in his list of acquaintance; for when they see the operations of his art, they cannot fail to judge of the exertions of his mind, and of the necessity he was under to keep it collected and in force. Had he let in the world upon his work, their very praises would have been unseasonable, and an interruption to the progress of it. In my opinion, therefore, he did perfectly right in holding the door against all observers, and myself (tho' one of the most anxious, and I flatter myself the least intrusive) amongst the rest. I now assure myself of his success, and have a fellow feeling in the satisfaction which his laurels will bestow.

"I am coming to town on Tuesday and shall stay only that night and Wednesday, and on Thursday set out with my friend Dilly to Bedfordshire with a view of paying a visit to my old relation Mr. Reynolds, whom I have not seen for some time, and who is at the end of life or very near it: I have accepted Mr. Dilly's kind offer of a bed at his house, and we shall be accompanied by Mr. Boswell on our journey. I hardly flatter myself I can get to Cavendish Square from the Poultry, as my time is laid out in business; but if I can, I do not want for inclination and attraction. Accept of the best compliments and good wishes of your guests*, Mrs. Cumberland and Sophia, and believe me most sincerely and affectionately your's,

"R. CUMBERLAND."

* Alluding to a visit at Cambridge.

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At the time when the Shakspeare Gallery was the subject of general conversation and interest, Mr. Cumberland was also engaged in writing his Observer; and entering himself warmly into the feelings of the public, he took occasion to introduce into the ninety ninth number of that work a supposed translation of an imaginary Greek fragment, recording a similar scheme by an Athenian Areopagite in honour of their great dramatist, Æschylus; intending thereby to describe, under the appropriate names of Apelles, Parrhasius, and Timanthes, three pictures to be painted by Reynolds, West, and Mr. Romney. The picture of the Tempest which he there describes, was the one which Mr. Romney had begun before the Boydell speculation was thought of; for Mr. Cumberland never saw the picture which was sent to the Gallery, till after it was finished; and that was some years subsequent to the publication of the Observer. The traits of character which he has given to Timanthes, apply so exactly to Mr. Romney, that they may be introduced here, as constituting a part of his peculiarities.

"This modest painter, though residing in the capital of Attica, lived in such retirement from society, and was so absolutely devoted to his art, that even his person was scarce known to his competitors. Envy never drew a word from his lips to the disparagement of a contemporary, and emulation could hardly provoke his diffidence into a contest for fame, which so many bolder rivals were prepared to dispute."

In the autumn of this year Mr. Romney again visited Paris, in company with Mr. Hayley and the Reverend Thomas Carrardine. The following two letters, addressed to me, give a brief account of some of the principal circumstances which occurred in that excursion.

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Paris, August 5th, 1790.

"My dear Son,

"We are at length arrived at Paris in good health and spirits, after a journey of three days from Brighton. We have been here only one day, I, therefore, cannot yet say much. Paris is quiet, though they are very apprehensive that our preparations for war are against them. The news just arrived from Spain will, I hope, stop that apprehension; it is—they wish for peace. I should have written to you before I left England, had I had time; as I knew it would give much pleasure to hear that Prince William has sat to me; and that the Prince of Wales has been at my house, and admired a new picture of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and told me he would sit to me when he returned from Brighton."

—Paris, August 10th.

"I got so far, but could not advance a word further, the weather was so extremely hot; I, therefore, lost the opportunity of sending by the ambassador's packet.—I can now inform you that the weather has become more temperate, and that we have had much pleasure in viewing the pictures and curiosities of Paris. The people are still gay and good-humoured, but not so fantastic as they were; indeed it is a pleasant place to live in when a man wishes to dissipate. Every body meets either at the theatres, (of which there are nine open at this season when Paris is the thinnest of people,) or in the Palais Royal every evening. The last is a large quadrangle with a beautiful arcade on all sides; the whole of the Piazza is filled with rich shops for all kinds of trinkets and elegancies, and with splendid coffee houses: it is planted with trees, and crowded with people of all ranks, walking till twelve o'clock at night. The whole of the apartments over the shops are let to ladies of pleasure, whose windows look

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down upon the people walking in the arcade and the square; which renders it one of the most licentious and splendid places in Europe. We have been much delighted with the performances in the theatres, particularly by the women: they are far before us; it is astonishing how exquisitely some of the women act, especially in comedy. I wish I could say that Mrs. Jordan was upon a par with some of them.—I cannot help reflecting that the minds of a people and I may say their morals too, become almost entirely changed when daily habituated to public spectacle and rendezvous; it is viewing nature through a false medium, which warps, and often entirely destroys those delicate feelings that grow up with us, and are the basis of true happiness.—I am always pleased to hear that you pursue your studies with vigour, and you may be assured it will awaken additional feelings of tenderness and satisfaction in your

"Affectionate father,
"GEO. ROMNEY."

"Dear Son,

"I promised to write to you when I arrived in England, which is now about three weeks ago; but I was taken ill the day after I reached Mr. Hayley's, and continued so till last sunday, when I journeyed to London. I have been tolerable since, and gain health every day. I believe I caught cold in coming over the water; we lay twenty two hours in bed, and it rained all the time and was very hot.

"Our journey to France was accompanied with every thing that was flattering and extraordinary.—Madame Sillery, the lady who wrote the Tales of the Castle, and is governess to the Duke of Orleans' children, shewed us great attention. We dined with her twice, and she carried us into the country twelve miles to Rancy,

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a seat of the Duke of Orleans, which is a beautiful place, laid out in the English taste—and another time she took us to a convent, where we saw the whole of it, which could not have been done without a prince of the blood.—The Duke de Chartres and his brother and sister accompanied us, and dined with us. They all speak English. The carriage carried twelve people, which is a very comfortable and sociable way of travelling; it was drawn by eight horses.—The Duke de Chartres is a very fine young man, about sixteen, and very accomplished.

"We dined with the ambassador twice; they* shewed great politeness in going out with us twice to see curiosities.

"Excuse my saying more at present,
"And believe me to be
"Your most affectionate father,
"GEO. ROMNEY."

In 1791 he painted Mrs. St. George and child, whole-length.

Mrs. Morton Pitt and child, half-whole-length.

It was about this time that he painted *The Infant Shakspeare, nursed by Tragedy and Comedy.* This exquisite picture was sold to Mr. Newbery for one hundred and sixty five guineas.

The Dancing Bacchante; sold to Mr. C. Curwen.

The Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions, already mentioned.

The following two letters are from Doctor Potter, and will be interesting to the reader on many accounts. The first will afford

* Lord Gower and Lady Sutherland.

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peculiar gratification to the good people of Lowestoft, as conveying a flattering testimony to their character from their late amiable and excellent pastor. As far as it concerns Mr. Romney, it justly upbraids him for a failing to which he was but too subject—a backwardness in writing letters and in finishing pictures—and which at this time was beginning to grow upon him. The second shews that he had complied with the Doctor's wishes in both respects, though tardily.

Lowestoft, Suffolk, 30th Decr., 1791.

"Dear Sir,

"Though I have lost my connexion with my old Turkey merchant, and am removed thirty miles from him, I had sometime ago an opportunity of ordering him to send you one of his finest fowls; whether he has sent it, and you have received it, I know not; you will never let me know: do not think I have so trifling a mind as to wish to be thanked; but there is some satisfaction in being certain that what was intended as a remembrance was received; and more in knowing, that a friend, whom one values, is well.

"When I had last the pleasure of seeing you, the honour done me by the Lord Chancellor was in its fresh bloom; the following summer I received as unexpected and as profitable a favour from the then Bishop of Norwich; his Lordship came to my house, offered me, and forced me to accept this living with its usual appendage; it is the best and most reputable preferment in our Bishop's gift. I knew that I should be obliged to purchase this house, to repair and furnish it; I knew not how so exposed a situation, so near the sea, would agree with my weak constitution; I dreaded the clerical duty of a large town; and had not a wish to increase my income; therefore I quitted

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Scarning with reluctance: but upon trial I grew fond of the place, and pleased with the people, the soberest, the quietest, the civilest I ever knew. The town is built along the edge of the cliff, with gardens on the east down to the beach; my house is near the highest point, from my hall door we go down seventy eight steps to the bottom of my garden; the sea is very near, and the track of navigation close to the shore; as I now sit by the fire in my study, I have a full view of the German Ocean; Rotterdam is the opposite point.

"Thus far all is well; but, my dear Sir, neither honour, nor money, nor situation will exempt us from the ills of life. Last summer (last year) in my attendance at the cathedral at Norwich I laid the foundation of a very severe illness, which confined me from the first of August to the twelfth of December. I was resident at Norwich during the months of April and May last, but very infirm; I have ever since been gradually gaining strength, and am wonderfully recovered. As soon as I had this appointment I brought my son hither, happy in having him near me; he was then in bad health, he has been declining ever since, and I cannot flatter myself with a hope of his recovery; I must lose him, and probably soon. This induces me once more to entreat you to send me his picture; his memory will always be dear to me; let me have the melancholy pleasure of seeing his image ever before me. Nothing, but his recovery, of which I despair, could gratify me so much. Can you refuse me this consolation?—I should be glad to have it sent to me at Norwich, with which city we have an easy communication. I shall be resident there, in the Close, during the months of April and May next. With every good wish,

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obliged humble servant,

"R. Potter."

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Lowestot, Decr. 17th, 1792.

"My dear Sir,

"Your letter gave me more pleasure and satisfaction than I am able to express, on a double account, as it assures me of the continuance of your regard and friendship, and tells me that I shall soon receive my son's picture; for both which I most heartily thank you. You will be so good as to send the picture to me in the Close, Norwich, directed to the care of Mr. Utten, our factotum there. I shall request him to take it out of the case, as I believe paintings are injured by being kept too close. I intend to remove from these bleak cliffs to my little warm nest at Norwich in the first week of January and will write to you as soon as I get thither. You will give me leave to pay for the frame, &c.—My son died in February last; I was at that time dangerously ill, but had the good fortune to be under the care of a physician who knows something; he not only restored me, but has given me firmer health than I had known for some years past. Such health and better, as you are a much younger man, I wish you for your own sake, for the honour of Apelles-ism, and for posterity.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most obliged and affectionate humble servant,

"R. Potter."

As the following letter from Mr. Romney, addressed to me, contains some particulars respecting his art, I need not, perhaps, apologize for inserting it here.

February 4th, 1792.

"Dear Son,

"I have had so little time to spare this winter that I have not been able to write. I have preserved my health, however, better than last

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winter. I have been using a flesh-brush, dipt in salt water, and brushing myself all over every morning, and after that rubbing myself with a rough towel, which has contributed much to my health and spirits.—The beginning of winter Mr. Hayley was in town above six weeks, and a Mr. Clarke of St. Johns', which took up all my leisure hours; and since that, Madame Sillery, Mademoiselle D' Orleans, and Pamela have been in London; the last I am painting, who is very beautiful; and a head, also, of Madame Sillery.—I have given some part of my time to them.—I have nearly finished Cassandra; I believe it will do well. Joan D' Arc is considerably advanced; and I have finished several pictures and begun others.—I have made, and am making designs from Milton; and mean to make several before I begin to paint them, but it is quite *a secret*.—I am glad to hear that you have passed your divinity act.—I have seldom seen Hubbersty; I have dined out often, and had people at dinner, who would not suit with him. However, if I had seen him more frequently, I should have filled up some vacant day with his company at dinner.

"I am most affectionately

"Yours, &c."

He painted two half-whole-lengths of Pamela; they were finished as far as the sitter was necessary, but he never had time to complete them. One he gave to Mr. Hayley, and the other was bought many years after by Lord Dunlo (the Earl of Clancarty) for Lady Conolly.

In 1792 he painted the two children of Mr. Fitzackley, half-length.

In June of this year he painted the portrait of *Thomas Paine* for Cooper, of Manchester. It is one of the finest heads ever produced by pencil, both for professional skill, and physiognomical expression.

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The character is simple, but vulgar; shrewd, but devoid of feeling. Sharpe has made a clever engraving from it. I wish this excellent artist had made more after Mr. Romney's works; he was the only engraver of the day who could do him justice. If Paine had not been notorious by his mischievous writings, this portrait alone would have rescued his name from oblivion.

I think the following letter from Miss Seward ought not to be suppressed, though its contents may not, perhaps, be regarded as of much importance; it, however, communicates some information.

"To George Romney, Esquire.

Lichfield, July 6th, 1792.

"My dear Friend,

"When, at a good young man's request, I was prevailed upon to mention him to you, it was without any expectation that his wishes could be successful. Conscious of the numerous applications of this sort, inevitably made to you, I had no hope for my townsman; and indulged his longing that I should write to you in his behalf from the same motive, (as I told Mr. Hayley in my answer to his kind letter on this subject,) which induced Johnson to present a hopeless petition in favour of the condemned Dodd. I trusted you would conceive it impossible I should be so unreasonable as to consider your declining my application, as the least degree of unkindness. With your apology, through Mr. Hayley, I rested perfectly satisfied —but, in a few days, after I heard from *him*, comes a letter from Butler full of grateful acknowledgments for the precious, and high prized privileges you indulgently allow him; and for the obligation and advantage of your correcting remarks upon his attempts, resulting from the permission of copying your pictures.

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"Indeed, my dear Romney, this is *kind* in you beyond all my hopes; and I consider myself as not less obliged on this account, than your half-adoring pupil. There is no resisting the desire I feel to obtrude my thanks upon *yourself*, tho' I had already expressed them to Mr. Hayley. You are never expected to *answer* letters—writing to *one* friend, you must write to *others*; and your pencil gives you more sedentary employment than, I fear, can be good for your health, in the preservation of which the nation is interested as well as your personal friends.

"Adieu! beloved and honoured Titiano—how *that name* recalls the *happy, happy* hours I passed with you at Eartham; when by the title "*Muse*" you summoned me to the morning walk!

"Your ever obliged,

"A SEWARD."

The following letter from Mr. Romney, addressed to me, contains much interesting information.

London, October 10th, 1792.

"Dear John,

"I have not been able till very lately to say much in favour of my health; but, thank God, I am now well recovered from a very unhealthy and uncomfortable summer. I was near a month at Mr. Hayley's, where I met Mr. Cowper, and Mrs. Smith; and yet, in spite of such good company, and bathing, my health continued very poorly.—Mr. Cowper is a most excellent man; he has translated Milton's Latin Poems, and I suppose very well. Hayley is writing the life of Milton, so you may imagine that we were deep in that poet; every thing belonging to him was collected together, and some

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part of his works read every day. Mrs. Smith is writing another Novel, which, as far as it is advanced, is, I think, very good. She began it while I was there, and finished one volume. She wrote a chapter every day, which was read at night, without requiring any correcting. I think her a woman of astonishing powers. She has two daughters grown to womanhood, a son in the East Indies, and another at Winchester school; and she supports them almost wholly by her writing. She and the two poets were employed every morning from eight o'clock till twelve in writing, when they had a luncheon, and walked an hour; they then wrote again till they dressed for dinner. After dinner they (Hayley and Cowper) were employed in translating an Italian Play on the subject of Satan; about twenty lines was the number every day. After that they walked, or played at Coits; then tea, and after that they read till supper time. This was their general plan of each day. I mention this as an example of the most rational employment of time, and of the greatest industry.

"I am studying hard, and have had a great number of letters to write, which has been the cause of my delay—indeed, writing harasses me more than any thing else.

"Our good friend* is in the north; if you see him you may talk with him concerning what you said to me about making a purchase in the north.—Madame de Sillery and her party are now in town, &c."

This visit to Eartham was productive of many advantages. It was then that he painted the portraits of Charlotte Smith and of Cowper, both in crayons; the latter gave birth to the following Sonnet, which Mr. Romney received the beginning of November through the medium of Mr. Hayley.

* Mr. Thomas Greene.

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To George Romney, Esq.

"Romney,—expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvass, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face
With strokes that time ought never to erase,—
Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that, tho' I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.
But this I mark—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see,
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?"

"W. Cowper."

Mr. Cowper is said to have had some difficulty in satisfying his own mind while composing this Sonnet; but whatever pains it may have cost him, they certainly were not fruitless; for it is exquisite in neatness and point.

Soon after this he received the following letter also from Mr. Cowper.

"My dear Romney,

"Since I left Eartham nothing has occurred that has given me so much pleasure as the arrival of your fine picture of our most amiable friend Hayley; and your kindness in sending me what the box contained beside, gratifies me in the highest degree, convincing me that

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I am not forgotten by one whom I shall always remember with affection. All arrived safe, and for all I thank you.—My young cousin has told me by letter how kindly you behaved to him when he called on you. For this I thank you likewise, for I love him and have great reason to do so. It was a very sensible mortification to me that I could not have the pleasure of seeing you at your own house in my way through London; but the danger of offending others whom I should have been obliged to pass unvisited, deterred me. The happy day I hope will come when you will make me amends for what I lost for that severe necessity, by giving us your company at Weston. Happy indeed should I be to see you here, and the hope of it, which you gave me encouragement to entertain, is too pleasant to be slightly parted with. Hayley will be called to London sometime in the course of the coming year, and a chaise will bring you easily in seven hours. A little relaxation will be good for you, and your enjoying it here will be equally good for me. I have been a poor creature ever since I saw you; dispirited to the greatest degree and incapable of all mental exertion; a state from which I do not expect deliverance till the buds shall peep and less sullen skies revive me. Mrs. Unwin is at least as well as she was at Eartham—perhaps a little better. She desires me to say how kindly she remembers you, and how much she shall rejoice to see you.

"Adieu,—God bless you!

"Believe me affectionately yours,

Weston Underwood,
Nov. 28th, 1792.

"Wm. Cowper."

Mr. Romney's delightful picture of *Milton and his two Daughters* owes its origin likewise to those attic conversations at Eartham;

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it was not, however, painted till the autumn of 1793. Mr. Whitbread bought it soon after it was finished for two hundred guineas. He brought Charles Fox to see it, and it was with his approbation and advice that the purchase was made. The Boydells gave Mr. Romney fifty guineas to be allowed to take a print from it.

Some years after he received the following copy of verses and the accompanying note, from a gentleman of the name of *Cooper*.

FOR MR. ROMNEY.

"With Mr. Cooper's compliments, as an acknowledgment for the pleasure he has received from the exquisite composition of Milton and his two Daughters, lately presented him by a nephew."

UNDER A PRINT (FROM ROMNEY) OF MILTON AND HIS TWO DAUGHTERS.

"See the blind bard, whose vast and mighty mind
Could soar and leave the universe behind;
Could stretch its fancy through the tracts on high,
Beyond the blazing limits of the sky;
And thro' night's *outward darkness* knew to sing
How Satan journey'd on his murky wing;
Of Michael's battles, Pandæmonium, tell,
Messiah's thunders, and the flames of hell.
This is the man, and thus behold he sat
In all the greatness of domestic state;
View him his lofty epic here begin,
Without all darkness, but all light within;
His lovely offspring aiding in the plan,
With almost adoration of the man.

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Observe that filial eye; by duty led,
She would not lose one syllable he said;
And mark the sister, sedulous to share
The honour of her name, transcribe with care.
—This is the bud, which afterwards unfurl'd,
Has bloom'd—has charm'd—astonish'd all the world."

J. C.

Having lately devoted more of his time to historical painting in consequence of the Shakspeare Gallery, he began to experience a want of casts to aid his memory, and to correct the imperfections of nature in studying the *Nude*; he, therefore, sent to his friend Flaxman at Rome, one hundred pounds, and commissioned him to purchase to that amount such as he should deem the best and most suitable, according to his experienced judgment and taste.

The following letter from that gentleman will give the particulars, and also some account of his own studies.

Rome, Septr. 12th, 1792.

"Dear Sir,

"I have sent you ten large cases of plaister casts by the Ship Arno from Leghorn, John Burstall, Master; they were carefully packed under my own observation, and I hope will arrive safe. I have spent several months in collecting them; some I have had moulded from the antique on purpose, and I think I have sent you the cream of the finest things in Rome, as far as the money would go—there is a group of Laocoon and his Sons, which cost eighty Roman crowns, or eighteen pounds English—the Apollo Belvidere cost forty Roman crowns, or nine pounds English.—I have sent you besides,

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groups of Castor and Pollux, of Cupid and Psyche, a figure of Apollo the lizard-killer, a cast of the bas relief on the Burghese vase—a fine bas relief of the destruction of Niobe's family, several busts, and all the best fragments of legs and arms, &c., which I could find—the whole of the casts cost fifty seven pounds ten shillings, English, or two hundred and fifty Roman crowns—the packing cases, packing, and porterage, eighty four Roman crowns, or nineteen pounds English —the custom-house duties, shipping, and carriage to Leghorn, twelve pounds ten shillings—so that in all I have laid out eighty eight pounds ten shillings.—I have remaining in my hands eleven pounds ten shillings, which I will lay out in other casts and send them to you as soon as possible—I have sent the bill of lading inclosed. You will do me the favour to let me know when you have received this letter; or, if you have not time to write, be so kind to call on my sister, and desire her to let me know. If any of the casts should be broken pray let my father mend them; or if he has a mind to mould any of the smaller articles pray let him. My employments at present are, finishing Lord Bristol's great group in marble, making a model for a restoration of the Torso Belvidere, and, in the evenings, making a series of drawings from Homer and Dante, which are engraving. Pray give my duty to my father and mother when you see them, and tell them I shall certainly see them the beginning of the ensuing summer at farthest with God's permission—with gratitude for all your kindness, and warmest wishes for your health and happiness, I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. FLAXMAN, JUN."

Having considered Mr. Flaxman's letters as of too important a character to be withheld, both with regard to that eminent sculptor

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himself, and also on account of the interesting information they contain; but especially as they relate to circumstances connected with the life of Mr. Romney: and knowing also, at the same time, that I should not be justified in publishing them without his permission; I accordingly wrote to him, and received the following answer; which, also, in like manner, claims insertion here on account of its interesting contents, at least, as far as relates to Mr. Romney.

To the Revd. John Romney.

"My dear Sir,

"I was favoured by your very kind letter this morning, and assure you there is no danger that I am likely to forget my former valued friend or his worthy son; I always remember Mr. Romney's notice of my boyish years and productions with gratitude; his original and striking conversation; his masterly, grand, and feeling compositions are continually before me, and I still feel the benefits of his acquaintance and recommendations. I am not surprised at your desire to correct misstatements in the published life of a father so eminent in his art, adorned besides with qualities equally rare and valuable. I am sure his late biographer intended to honour his memory with his best exertions, but we must not forget the feebleness of human judgment; we may sometimes think we have offered a splendid tribute, where glitter supplies the place of reality, and false sentiment usurps the place of real principle; how much it is to be regretted such publications abound at present! They blind the understanding, and destroy the religious and moral sense of right. A son's corrections are, perhaps, the best antidotes, although the task is delicate and difficult. I wish my employments permitted me to accept the agreeable invitation to your house, I should be happy to retrace with you the talents and virtues of my honoured friend, but my engagements are

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imperative, and do not permit me the association* of angels and cherubs (much as I love them) at any distance from home at present.

"I thank you sincerely for the indulgence allowed to my letters; such as they are pray make use of them in any way you may think proper, and I wish they were more expressive of your father's merits and worth.

"I hope you enjoy better health than formerly, and I do not relinquish the hope of seeing you in Buckingham Street, where I shall be extremely happy to acknowledge your attentions in the humble style of our limited household.

"I have the honour to remain,
"My dear Sir, with great respect,
"Your obliged humble servant,
"JOHN FLAXMAN."

11th Augt., 1821.

Mr. Romney had great pleasure in studying and contemplating these casts; and I have known him sometimes have evening parties in his private painting-room, when he suspended a powerful lamp over the Laocoon, which, by its descending rays, gave a bold relief to the muscles and prominences of the figures, and a terrific grandeur to the group altogether, approaching to something like reality. I remember his mentioning to me once, a scheme he had contrived for illuminating the theatres, by throwing the light upon the stage from above; by which the actors would be seen to greater advantage and

* This alludes to my having mentioned, by way of inducement to visit me, my own children, as suitable models for monumental studies of cherubs and angels; he not having any of his own.

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with more effect, and the eye of the spectator less offended by the glare.

In 1793 he painted a large whole-length of the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, for the University of Aberdeen.

The Margrave and Margravine of Anspach, two whole-lengths.

Mrs. George Horsley and children, half-length.

In the following winter he produced the *Indian Woman.*

> "When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
> And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
> Which *she, with pretty and with swimming gait*
> *Following her womb, then rich with my young 'squire,*
> *Would imitate.*"
>
> Mid. Sum. Night Dream, Act 2nd, Scene 2nd.

This was one of the most exquisite of Mr. Romney's pictures. It was bought by Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill, for three hundred guineas, and afterwards sold in his first sale to a gentleman, I believe of Dorsetshire, for nearly the same sum.

He painted about this time, also, the *Death of Ophelia,* and *Susan,* from the ballad of "When the Seas were roaring;" neither of which was in a finished state. And those various unfinished pictures, representing *Titania* under different circumstances, and in different attitudes; one of which, a beautiful naked figure, I regret much that I did not reserve from the sale. It was, in truth, a very fairy. It represented her reposing in her bower, and in a state of somnolency; and, if I remember rightly, Bottom sleeping by her side. All these except one, were, I believe, bought by artists; and have, I have no doubt, contributed essentially to improve the taste of the succeeding

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generation of painters.—The one excepted was that of Titania, Puck and the Changeling, purchased by Sir John Leicester.

In 1794 he painted a whole-length portrait of the Duke of Portland.

A very fine large half-length of Abraham Newland, for the Bank of England.

The Earl of Euston, (Duke of Grafton,) half-length for the Marquis of Camden, then Viceroy of Ireland, whither it was sent.

Also, a three-quarters of the humble individual who writes this; no otherwise entitled to notice here than as being a specimen of his bold and spirited manner, and as having been finished in two sittings; the whole time not exceeding three hours.

In August I accompanied him in an excursion to the Isle of Wight. He was then in bad health. We sailed from Portsmouth in the packet, and had a brisk, but favourable gale, which carried us rapidly through Lord Howe's fleet, which was then lying at Spithead, with the recently captured French ships. The day was fine, and the passage delightful. We stayed at Cowes three weeks, occasionally making excursions to different parts of the island. On our return I left him at Eartham. A visit to Holland was contemplated with a view to purchase pictures, which I am sorry did not take place; but from what cause I do not now remember. That this tour to the Isle of Wight had, in some measure, repaired his shattered constitution, may be inferred from his subsequent works: for in the following winter he painted *Newton making experiments with the Prism.* This he intended as a companion to *Milton and his Daughters,* to which it bore a strong resemblance, both in the simplicity and domestic character of the subject, and in the composition of the design. It

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represented that contemplative philosopher seated on the right of the picture, attentively observing a Prism, which he holds with his right hand in a sun-beam, and two female attendants placed opposite; one of whom with a silly kind of laugh is expressing her astonishment at the phenomenon of the prismatic colours projected on the wall; while the other is in the act of carefully bringing in a caraff of water. The composition is simple, according with the sobriety of the subject; and the effect beautiful: the countenance of one female is in shadow, and that of the other (the laughing girl) in a reflected light, or demi-shade. This latter gives a fascinating charm to the picture. It is to be regretted, however, that this face received some injury from a peculiar circumstance. In 1799 Mr. Romney, when his powers were almost extinct, took a fancy to make some alteration in the air of this head: he began, but could not proceed, and the face was spoiled. In this state I found it some time after. All that could be done in order to save the picture, was, to un-do; but the paint was become hard. By the application of a linen rag moistened with spirits of turpentine, and a certain degree of rubbing, the recent colouring was at length removed; but not without some damage to the original painting. Had it not been for this blemish, (which was by no means obvious to an ordinary observer,) the picture would have been inestimable. Both Mr. Cumberland and Mr. Hayley made some endeavours to prevail on Trinity College, Cambridge, to purchase it, the latter through Bishop Watson; but without success. They said they had Roubiliac's statue, and that was sufficient. That sumptuous society ought not to have suffered two or three hundred guineas to have prevented them from possessing a picture, which, from the very nature of its subject, would always have excited feelings of pleasure and honest pride, independent of its intrinsic excellence as a painting. Their having Roubiliac's statue, should rather have in-

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duced them to purchase, than to reject this picture: because, though they represented the same individual, yet being the productions of different, though sister arts, they did not supersede one another; but were, as it were, coadjutors to promote the same dignified object —the honour of Newton and the College. Nothing certainly can exceed the noble simplicity of that fine statue; but still the subject is more suitable to painting than to sculpture; because it is, in fact, a subject of colour. It may be remarked here, also, that Mr. Romney painted the head of Newton from the same mask, from which Roubiliac had originally modelled the head of the statue; which gave to the picture all that individuality which is characteristic of a portrait. —The injury done to the picture was subsequent to the refusal by the College.

This leads me to mention another picture, which Mr. Romney painted from a mask, for Mr. Beckford of Fonthill; viz—that of Alderman Beckford; in which he is represented at full-length in the robes of Lord Mayor, with the action, and in the attitude of an orator: in allusion, I believe, to his celebrated reply to the King's answer to the address, remonstrance, and petition of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, in 1770,—and, I believe, from the same mask, from which the statue in Guildhall was taken.

In 1795 he again painted the portrait of his old patron and friend, the Duke of Richmond, half-length.

A whole-length of the Earl of Westmorland, which was sent to Ireland.

An admirable picture of Mrs. Bosanquet and five children.

A whole-length of Governor Hastings.

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About this period he painted that excellent picture representing *Flaxman modelling the Bust of Hayley,* attended by his pupil, Thomas Hayley; and Mr. Romney himself looking from behind. If I were to select two companions for this noble production of his genius, I should place it between Raffaelle's picture of *Frederick Carondelet,* and that by Rubens of *The four Philosophers.* All the individuals represented in Mr. Romney's picture are strong characteristic likenesses, except his own, which is unfinished and unfavourable. Flaxman's is a true *fac-simile* of nature; the picture, however, never received the finishing touch. It having been claimed by Mr. Hayley, in consequence of some vague expression inadvertently uttered by Mr. Romney, about the time he was sitting, was accordingly delivered to him in 1802; but only for his life. After his decease, it was bequeathed to Mr. Greene, the solicitor, Mr. Romney's old and esteemed friend. This part of the bequest was made with my concurrence; for though I was myself desirous of possessing the picture, yet when I understood that Mr. Greene wished much to have it, I waived my claim in his favour. Before it was put into Mr. Hayley's possession I had taken some steps to have it engraved, being much grieved that so admirable a performance should be placed in the obscure keeping of an individual, for whom I knew that Mr. Hayley had intended it. Finding, however, that my attempt had given him much umbrage, I reluctantly, and with regret, abandoned my intention. It having now, however, become, by hereditary right, the property of Mr. Greene, the member for Lancaster, I hope by his friendly concurrence and cooperation with me a well executed engraving may be effected by the aid of a subscription, such as will do justice to the picture, and to the painter. If Mr. Hayley had not interfered I should have got Sharpe to have engraved it. It is a serious

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disadvantage to the professional character of Mr. Romney, that so excellent a picture should never have been seen by the public.

Another fine picture, which he also painted about this time, was, a *Lady in the character of Titania, with her Children, as fairies,* shooting at bats, with bows and arrows. This was one of his best performances, and was painted for the Earl of Egremont, a nobleman for whom Mr. Romney always expressed great esteem.

In the winter of 1795 he painted a head of himself, which, though slight, and not entirely finished, being painted at once, shews uncommon power of execution; the likeness also, is strong, but there is a certain expression of langour that indicates the approach of disease, which had in fact already begun to assail his constitution. It is remarkable that it is painted without spectacles, though he had been in the habit of using glasses for many years. As I do not know in what manner other painters, advanced in years, assist their vision by the application of spectacles, it may, perhaps, be rendering some service, to inform them that he used a pair containing two half glasses for each eye, separated horizontally; the lower segment for seeing objects near, through which he always painted; the upper, at a greater distance, through which he judged of the effect.

I may mention here also, the three-quarters portrait of Isaac Reed, the learned editor of Shakspeare, which was painted about this period; and which Mr. Romney, with his usual liberality, gave to that mild and benevolent man, as a token of his esteem; who, also, in return, presented the painter with a set of his Shakspeare, accompanied with the following letter.

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Staple Inn, November 7th, 1796.

"Dear Sir,

"Do me the favour to accept a set of the last edition of Shakspeare. It is a small, in truth, a very small acknowledgment for the honour you have done me, in painting the portrait of one, so little entitled to expect the trouble you have taken about him. Every particle of vanity I am possessed of is now completely gratified, and I feel great satisfaction in reflecting that my name may probably go down to posterity, accompanied by yours. Beyond it I have little desire and less expectation of fame. I hope we shall meet to-morrow at the Club, until which time, I remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Your obliged faithful servant,

"ISAAC REED."

The last considerable picture he painted, was a *Conversation Subject,* containing the portraits of Mr. Hayley, his Son, Mr. Meyer, (the son of the late Jeremy Meyer, R. A.) and of the painter himself. All I know of it, is derived from the following letter, and from Mr. Hayley's description; who was represented sitting at a table with Tully's Essay on Friendship before him, and the two youths standing by.

Novr. 10th, 1796.

"Dear John,

"My last excursion has been longer and attended with greater advantage to my health than formerly; indeed it was so debilitated that I meditated a longer stay than usual; and, to continue and extend the time, and to amuse Mr. Hayley, I began a picture of four

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friends—Hayley, Tom, young Meyer, and myself; and completed it, which is thought one of my best.

"The picture for Petworth I finished at Hayley's; it was very much liked. I met with particular kindness from my Lord of Petworth," &c.

Here terminates Mr. Romney's professional life: and I believe, I may truly say, that the number of pictures painted by him during the twenty one years he resided in Cavendish Square, has not been exceeded by any other artist in the same period; exclusive of an immense quantity of unfinished portraits and other works, which had been accumulated from various causes—and all this in the decline of life, when his general health was infirm, when his application was frequently interrupted by intervals of sickness, and when, latterly, his genius had almost constantly to struggle with an oppressive and debilitating languor.

It was a favorite idea of Mr. Romney's in the decline of life, to form a complete Gallery of Casts, and to open it to any youths of respectability; and thus to afford to others those facilities of study, of which he himself had not had the benefit: so that when his own practical powers should forsake him, he might still have the gratification of promoting the acquirements of others by superintending their studies himself—*vice cotis.* This scheme was in a great measure visionary; he had, however, at the close of his career, three pupils who have since distinguished themselves; viz.—Messrs. Isaac Pocock, Lonsdale, and Stewardson. The first was with him some time; Mr. Lonsdale had the benefit of copying from his Casts, and of studying his works, under his eye, during the spring of 1799,

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Mr. Romney having been requested to afford him instruction by the Duke of Hamilton. Mr. Stewardson was his last pupil, and had the advantage of such instructions as he was able to communicate after he went to reside at Kendal.

Mr. Robinson, another pupil who studied under him at an earlier period* is entitled to respectful notice here on account of the affectionate regard, which he has shewn for the memory of his excellent instructor, and of which he gave a striking proof in calling his son by the same name—now a gentleman of distinguished talents. Mr. Robinson in the account which he gave to Mr. Hayley respecting Mr. Romney himself, was certainly incorrect, but his observations on his art are in general true, and well worth transcribing here on account of their technical merit, being written by an artist well versed in the mechanism of oil colours. "His pencil was uncommonly rapid, and to see him introduce the back ground into one of his large pictures, was something like enchantment. He was very anxious concerning the preparation of his colours; the arrangement of his flesh-palette was very curious and simple, and in some of his figures, particularly in the arms, it is easy to trace the different gradations of tints, as they stood on the palette. This may be observed in his most delicate flesh, particularly in the arms of a Bacchante with a dog, sent to Sir William Hamilton at Naples; in his Serena in the boat; in the left arm of Mr. Henderson, in the character of Macbeth: this last was the most finished of all his flesh colour, and he told me he could go no farther. The head of Creon's (Cercyon's) daughter is less finished than any other from the same lady, *(Lady Hamilton;)* the child is very fine; the drapery was painted in an hour from a living model, which manner he preferred whenever he could accom-

* About 1785.

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plish it. The Lions were by Gilpin, and the picture was purchased by Admiral Vernon. Perhaps the Girl spinning is the best picture he painted at this period; he first caught the idea from observing a cobler's wife sitting in a stall."

As few of Mr. Romney's pictures have ever been before the public, his professional character has not had a fair opportunity of being duly appreciated. To obviate in some measure this disadvantage, I have noted several of his principal works in the course of these Memoirs; but, unless they could be seen collectively, a just estimate of his great talents cannot now be formed.

Some of the old members of the Royal Academy regarded him as a kind of independent rival; and, as he kept himself aloof from them, entertained hostile feelings towards him, which they lost no opportunity of expressing. There were others, however, among them, with whom he lived on terms of friendship, and who were free from that intolerant *esprit du corps*, so incompatible with the liberal spirit of the arts. In more recent times, two highly gifted and distinguished members of that body have stepped forward to vindicate his character. This very act alone shews that they were above such narrow and illiberal prejudices. It may, perhaps, be objected against Mr. Flaxman, that, as he was a particular friend of Mr. Romney, he might have been biased in his judgment; but that very intimacy gave him a better opportunity of judging; and any one who knew that accomplished statuary, must be sensible that he was incapable of maintaining any opinion contrary to the impartial conviction of his own mind. But this objection cannot apply to Mr. Philips, who could have no motive for his liberal critique on Mr. Romney's genius, but the purest love of truth and justice; for I am not aware that he was ever acquainted

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with Mr. Romney. I owe much gratitude to both these gentlemen for their disinterested testimony to his genius. The *laudari a laudato viro* is the highest meed of praise that a man of genius can obtain; and may they, when defunct, (as I grieve that the former is,) have their merits extolled by eulogists like themselves.

The infirmities of old age came upon Mr. Romney sooner than he expected; he reckoned upon a longer life, and in truth, according to the common course of vigorous nature, he might have retained his faculties unimpaired for at least ten years longer. His constitution, however, began to give way in his sixtieth year, (1794;) but his genius, like the light of a taper approaching to its extinction, occasionally burst into fits of splendour during its decline.

The following extract from a letter addressed to me (March 15th, 1794) shews the nature of his pursuits and views; and indicates strongly the irritability of his mind. "I have made many grand designs, I have formed a system of original subjects, moral, and my own—and I think one of the grandest that has been thought of—but nobody knows it.—Hence it is my view to wrap myself in retirement, and pursue these plans, as I begin to feel I cannot bear trouble of any kind."

He had studied Milton with much attention, and selected a series of subjects from the Paradise Lost, for great pictures, both of a sublime, and of a beautiful character. He had, also, formed a scheme of painting a number of pictures, representing the most important periods in human life; and it was to this, probably, that he alluded in the preceding extract. The first subject of this series, representing *The Birth of Man*, was considerably advanced. Another great work, which he commenced about 1796, was *The Temptation*

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of Christ. Had he finished this picture, it would have ranked him with Michael Angelo. It was equal in original conception and wild fancy to any thing ever produced by any artist. When one looked at Christ, silent passiveness was the idea which presented itself to the spectator; when at the fiends that assailed him, vociferating noise and boisterous insult. These visionary beings were the human passions and appetites personified. To aid the malevolent purpose, the illusive representations, or ghosts of Eve and Noah, were called forth. And the arch-fiend, the Miltonic satan, grand as the human mind can conceive him, viewed from the upper corner of the picture, with malignant satisfaction, the ready obedience of his imps*. The canvass, as far as I remember, was about sixteen feet by twelve; the ground was a darkish brown, and the figures were drawn with white chalk complete. It was all ready for painting, and the head of Christ was nearly finished, and that of Satan begun. From the darkness of the canvass, I should suppose that it was his intention to have given a sombre hue, and gloomy effect to the whole picture, corresponding both to the duskiness of the twilight, and to the character of its infernal agents and their design; and to have invested them with a certain degree of obscurity, in order that the imagination of the spectator might have a sufficient latitude for the exercise of its own exaggerations—*omne ignotum pro magnifico.* I do not remember his having ever painted upon a canvass of so dark a ground except once; and that is an unfinished sketch in oil colours, in my possession, representing the storming and burning of some city by night, in which the light of the conflagration is thrown upon an interesting group of old men, women, and children. The Temptation, being of inconvenient size, had been rolled up; and in that state was sent to Christie's auction room along with Mr. Romney's other

* Milton's Paradise Regained, book 4, lines 422, 423, 424, 425.

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pictures; not with any intention of exposing it for sale, but merely that it might be seen by the public: unfortunately there was no space for it, and it was never unrolled. An etching was to have been made from it for Hayley's Life of Mr. Romney; but the head of Christ was only taken, and that very imperfectly, and I never knew what became of the canvass after. In the Milton, which he was in the habit of studying, all the most striking and picturesque passages are marked, or underlined, by him; so that it may be regarded as a valuable painter's book.

Mr. Romney was naturally of a placid and easy disposition, and it was only in the decline of life, when his health was impaired by application, and his feelings ruffled by peculiar circumstances, that he manifested that morbidness of feeling, which Mr. Hayley has been so particular in noticing. The love of retirement, combining its influence with this diseased state of his mind, soon began to generate visionary and expensive schemes, which, instead of ministering to his comfort, aggravated his infirmities. He had lived so long in peculiar habits, that he had lost the just conception of that happiness, which results from retirement; its impressions, however, still remained on his memory, but distorted and exaggerated by the influence of a distempered imagination. From his youth he meditated on retirement; it was a family propensity, or (as some, perhaps, may think) *failing*; his father felt its influence, and my sentiments will appear from the following Sonnet.

MY WISH.

O may it be my happy lot to dwell
With sweet Retirement, nymph of placid mien,
(Far from the proud, the heartless, and the mean,)

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In some sequester'd and romantic dell.
There wrapt in visions, by bright fancy's spell,
  Ofttimes I'd wander, pensive, and unseen,
  By some lone brook, where poets might, I ween,
To rocks and trees their plaintive sorrows tell,
As Orpheus did of old. And may there be
  Attendant on my steps, that holy maid,
Heavenly Meditation; so that she
  May pour on me by her inspiring aid,
Visions of future bliss when soul is free,
  And in the dust the mortal body laid.

Without being romantic, however, my experience, and my feelings inform me, that the diversified enjoyments, arising from the contemplation of picturesque scenery in a romantic country, through the changing seasons of the year, and under every accident and circumstance of atmosphere;—from rural occupations and pursuits, (especially those connected with the cultivation of woods,) which inspire the mind with that philosophy, which lifts it from visible objects to the invisible creator of all things;—and from the cultivated society of domestic life, where elegant pursuits, and literature are the substitutes for cards and scandal—far, very far surpass any gratifications which dissipation, or the gaieties of the world can afford; where rainbow pleasure lures by its splendour, but eludes the grasp of its thoughtless and giddy pursuers. The love of retirement is not altogether constitutional; it is the result of nature and habit conjointly; for if a man's mind be naturally so organized as to be susceptible of strong impressions from picturesque objects; and if he be frequently exposed in early youth to loneliness and solitude, surrounded by the sublimer features of nature, he will necessarily seek amusement from contem-

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plating the objects around him; and soon acquire habits of self-enjoyment independent of society. The tranquilizing pleasures derived from such habits, will remain deeply impressed upon his memory; and, in the decline of life, when he becomes disgusted with the follies, and harassed by the molestations of the world, will make him long for a renewal for his early enjoyments.

Mr. Romney passed the first years of his life in a situation, and under circumstances, favourable for such impressions. The first object that presented itself to his daily vision, was the broad expanse of the boundless ocean, always sublime, but there picturesque, and beautiful also. The site of his father's house was on a kind of terrace, facing the west, and commanding an extensive view of the Irish sea; but from the hill immediately behind, the prospect was a perfect panorama. On the south lies the widely extending bay of Morecambe, with its low and unaspiring outline; and on the north, the retiring estuary of Duddon, which, when the tide is in, presents to the eye a picturesque view of uncommon beauty. It has all the appearance of a fine lake when viewed upwards. Vessels of light burthen might be frequently seen navigating it, which gave a pleasing variety, and animation to the scene; especially, in fine weather, when the white sails were relieved by the dark masses of shadow, which sometimes skimmed over the surface of the water. The high grounds on the Cumberland side, being well cultivated, and studded with white farm-houses and respectable mansions, also enlivened the prospect. Behind these, the sombre *Black-Comb* rose majestically, with its summit generally enveloped in a white or grey cloud in unsettled weather. More to the north, and in the distance, might be seen the pointed summits of the Scaw-Fell, and other adjacent mountains; but the most picturesque about the lakes are those of Conistone; especially

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the *Old Man*, which appears conspicuously to crown the head of the Duddon estuary. Behind, to the east, is the fertile district of Furness, with its winding vales, and swelling eminences: and the whole circumscribed by a range of distant mountains.—Such was the scenery that constantly met Mr. Romney's eye during the most impressible period of his life; varied often by storms and tempests, often by brilliant and glowing sunsets, often by that wild and skimming action of the clouds, which forebodes storm, or by that gloominess of atmosphere, or dark accumulation of cloud in the horizon, which foretells rain. The thunder storm approaching across the sea in a dark evening, from the distant streak which marked the horizon, till the ocean, and the hemisphere became one vast sheet of light; must have afforded him fine ideas of the sublime. The fretful, and incessant roaring of the distant breakers, or the swelling bursts of thunder, bringing danger as they increased in sound, must, in like manner, have impressed his mind with similar ideas, through the medium of a different organ.—The very first historical picture that Mr. Romney painted, was King Lear in a thunder storm.

Although it is pretty evident that he must have gathered considerable instruction from books, as has been already remarked; yet, till he went to London, nature may be regarded as his chief instructress; it was she whom he worshipped as his professional divinity; but as her inspirations are slowly imparted, and the communications from art rapid, his progress in his profession while he continued in the country, must have been greatly retarded. Judging, however, from what he then produced under such untoward circumstances, we may easily conceive what mighty works would have issued from his hands, had his genius, in due time, been directed to its proper objects; if instead of observing his ingenious father carve Corinthian capitals and

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make fiddles, or of learning from Williamson to play upon the violin, the mysteries of the Elgin Marbles had been revealed to him, with all their imposing influence. Notwithstanding, however, the many disadvantages under which he laboured, if his life and powers had been spared ten years longer, he would have produced, I am confident, pictures of the heroic, or imaginative character, superior to any thing that has hitherto appeared in this country.

When I visited Mr. Romney in 1796 I found him occupied in making plans of fantastic buildings, instead of studies for pictures as heretofore. It was evident that his mind was thrown of its pivot, and that painting had lost its influence. He was on the point of signing a contract for four acres of ground, on the Edgeware Road, at a rent of forty pounds per annum, for his life; with a stipulation that he should build a house upon it under certain restrictions. I soon perceived that it would be attended with more expense than his limited circumstances would allow, and, therefore, endeavoured to dissuade him from it, by representing to him the advantage of buying a ready built house. And, there being one at that time on sale, at Holly Bush Hill, Hampstead, his favourite retreat, to which he might easily have added a gallery and painting-room, at a small expense; I recommended it to his notice. Being made sensible of the prudence of my suggestion, he authorized me to call on Sir James Graham, to stop all further proceedings with respect to the purchase of the land on the Edgeware Road: and, though the writings were ready, and nothing further remained to be performed except the signature; yet that gentleman, with rare liberality and kindness, allowed him to revoke his intention, and would not accept of any remuneration for his trouble. I mention this circumstance with peculiar pleasure, both out of gratitude to the memory of that esteemed gentleman, and also,

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because, having myself experienced much evil from attornies, I am happy in being able to produce one instance of redeeming worth in that dangerous profession. The house at Hampstead was accordingly bought upon low terms, (about seven hundred pounds,) and for about five hundred more, he might have added a gallery, which would have answered all his purposes.—Thus I left him, and, as I flattered myself, extricated from a ruinous project. He was, however, unfortunately, under the influence of some worthless people, who profited by his imprudence. By them, and also by Mr. Hayley, he was still encouraged in the scheme of building. The house was a very good one, and convenient in all respects; with a very large garden pleasantly situated, and an excellent stable, coach house, &c., above the garden, on the top of the hill. In 1797 and 1798, having pulled down the stable &c., he built a new one upon some adjoining ground, which he had subsequently purchased; and upon the site of the old stable he raised a whimsical structure, consisting chiefly of a picture and statue gallery; but with few domestic accommodations: to this he also joined half the garden, in which he built a wooden arcade for a riding house. Hither he removed at Christmas, 1798, before the walls were dry, and let the old house at Hampstead for a rent which paid good interest for the original purchase money. The removal of his pictures, casts, &c., was attended with considerable expense; and for want of adequate room, the pictures were crammed into all vacant places, or arranged along the arcade, where, being exposed in the open air to the alternate action of moisture and frost, they were almost entirely destroyed in the course of the winter; several, also, were stolen. The expense of the new building amounted to two thousand, seven hundred, and thirty three pounds, besides many incidental charges of which there was no account. This structure and its appurtenances, when afterwards sold by auction, produced no

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more than three hundred and fifty seven pounds; and the old house, curtailed of the stables, and of so large a part of the garden, fetched a price equal to the original purchase money.—Such was the unfortunate result of his building scheme.

He sold the lease of his house in Cavendish Square to Mr. Shee, and superadded, as far as it was in his power to confer it, the *good will* also; and as a test of his *countenance*, sat to him for his portrait. This picture, however, without any reflection upon that distinguished artist, was not a fair representation of his physiognomy; because it was taken at a time when he was oppressed with mental languor, and when his faculties were in some degree impaired. It does not give that keen and penetrating look, which formerly indicated the power of his genius, it only represents a mental ruin, made more conspicuous, perhaps, by the accuracy of the similitude. In mentioning the name of Mr. Shee, I should not do justice to my own feelings, were I to omit to express the high sense I entertain of his personal worth, which I had many opportunities of witnessing during the short time I had the honour of his acquaintance. With respect to his professional talents, his own works will bear sufficient testimony to his genius, without any encomium from one, who is so little entitled to dispense praise; but I hope I may be permitted to say of him, what, I believe, cannot be said of any other living artist; that he excells in three different, but sister arts—painting, poetry, and music.

I did not see Mr. Romney again till he visited the north, in the summer of 1798, when he was become more corpulent, and apparently more healthy; but this appearance was fallacious, and I soon perceived that the energy of his mind was impaired. He still, however, could take likenesses with great accuracy; but not having any oil

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colours with him, his attempts were only in crayons. I took him to the lakes, and to the scenes of his youth; but they did not seem to afford him that degree of gratification, which one might have expected in a man formerly so alive to the beauties of nature. I apprehend that he must already have experienced some slight paralytic affection, which, I have no doubt, took place while he was engaged with the picture of *The Temptation of Christ*, and which consequently put a stop to that grand design. In the following winter, (1798,) he complained of a swimming in his head, so that he could not see with precision, and was frequently rubbing the back of his hand, where he felt a numbness. It was on this occasion that he told me, he had had a slight paralytic stroke; probably a second attack.

The next summer he came again to Kendal, when he purchased the place where I now reside. Feeling his infirmities grow upon him, he did not venture to return to Hampstead, but authorized me to sell his house at that place.

It would be desirable to throw a veil over the closing years of his life, and hide the infirmities of human nature; but such exhibitions sometimes have a moral tendency, and serve to humble the vanity of man. Reason, that noble faculty of the mind, which distinguishes man from the brute creation, and enables him to hold communion with his Maker, became entirely extinct before the dissolution of the body; and he departed from life mentally the same as when he came into existence. However distressing his case was to those about him, it is a consolation to think, that he was unconscious of his situation, and never suffered any bodily pain whatever. He died November 15th, 1802, when he had nearly completed his sixty eighth year. As his sole ambition was to excel in his art, he never aspired to any

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other distinction. He never sought to be admitted into any Society, and had no desire to affix titles to his name. The habits of his whole life were simple, and unostentatious; and like them, also, were the circumstances connected with his death, which were, in every respect, a contrast to those of his more fortunate contemporaries; who were honoured with public funerals, had their bodies deposited in St. Paul's, and monuments or statues erected to their fame; while the canopy of heaven is the dome of his Mausoleum, and the green grass which fringes his gravestone, the only ornament of his tomb. Circumstanced as he was at the time of his death, the only thing I could do, and what I deemed would be most grateful to his spirit, could he be made sensible of it, was to inter his remains with those of his ancestors, and to honour the place of his birth by raising a simple monument in Dalton church. When it was finished and taken thither, I went to point out to the mason the place where I intended it should be erected; which was in fact, the only proper situation in the church. I was much surprised, however, when I was made to understand from Lord George Cavendish's local steward, that that part of the wall belonged to his Lordship. Though this was announced to me in a manner expressive of prohibition; yet I felt no particular uneasiness, from the intimation, (except a little mortification at the delay and trouble it would occasion;) being confident that, whether the situation did, or did not belong to his Lordship, he, as a liberal minded man, would make no objection to its being appropriated to so noble a purpose; but would rather be glad of such an opportunity to testify his respect for genius. I accordingly wrote to his Lordship; but am sorry to say, his answer was not only a refusal without a reason, but a reproof for my not having informed myself better. I knew I had the vicar's permission, which I thought sufficient. In consequence of this, I made some inquiry, and was informed that his Lordship's right was founded on this—the chancel belonged to his Lordship as

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lay-rector, and when the church was new roofed, the former Lord George roofed the chancel at the same time; but as the timber did not correspond to the division, he roofed as far as the next rafters, the line of which divided the pier where the monument was intended to have been placed. How far this circumstance has conferred a right I have not taken the trouble to inquire; but that part of the church still belongs to the parish, and I should suppose the walls also; at the most, it could only be a divided right, and ought not to have been exercised in opposition to the parish. I, however, felt no disposition to resist; it did not become a pigmy to contend with a giant. The favour certainly was not great, and it is, therefore, difficult to account for the refusal. It could not have arisen from any personal motives, because, I believe, I was totally unknown to his Lordship; and I am sure Mr. Romney could never have done any thing to incur his displeasure: there was a minor circumstance which might, perhaps, have awakened feelings of a different kind:—Lady Elizabeth Compton was a sitter to Mr. Romney at the time when Lord George paid his addresses to her Ladyship, and his Lordship's name being in Mr. Romney's sitting book about that time, I apprehend that he must have attended at some of her sittings. With respect to the fact itself, in whatever light it is considered, it is not only an insult to the memory of Mr. Romney, but an indignity offered to genius in general, such as is not easily paralleled in the worst ages of the world, and quite incompatible with the liberal and enlightened spirit of the present times.*

* Some years after writing the above, having occasion to visit Dalton church for the purpose of seeing the register, I was not a little wonder-struck to find the pier occupied by a showy monument, erected to Lord George's lately deceased local steward. Had this individual been distinguished by any real merit, I should not have regretted the substitution; but his pretensions were of a questionable character, and better fitted for the silence of the grave. He had, to be sure, amassed great wealth by stewardships, and the practice of an attorney, which made him lordly; but, as I respect no man except for personal worth, I incurred his enmity by not paying particular court to him, and have reaped the bitter fruits of it upon more occasions than one.

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If this had been a private affair affecting myself individually, I should not have mentioned it here; but it is so closely connected with Mr. Romney's life, that I feel myself in duty bound to record it for my own justification, and to prevent any opprobrium that might attach to me for a supposed neglect of filial duty and regard. The monument was taken back to Kendal, the place where Mr. Romney had breathed his last, and erected to greater advantage in the church there, as a cenotaph. It simply records his birth and death, with a brief expression of eulogy on his genius.

THE END.

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A DESCRIPTIVE LIST

OF THE

PICTORIAL DESIGNS AND STUDIES

BY GEORGE ROMNEY,

Which were presented to the University of Cambridge by his Son, in 1817, *in order to be deposited in the Fitzwillium Museum.*

Exprimere affectus, paucisque coloribus ipsam
Pingere posse animam, atque occulis præbere videndam,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.———Dufresnoy.

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1. Consists of sixteen studies, which were made during Mr. Romney's residence at Rome, and soon after his return to England.

1st and 2nd. Two sketches of a naked female caressing a child; perhaps intended for Alope the daughter of Cercyon.

3rd. Venus and Adonis.

4th. Perhaps the same subject differently represented.—On the other side of the paper is a sketch of Jupiter.

5th. Another representation of Jupiter.

6th. Another variation of the same subject.

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7th. King Lear asleep.
8th. King Lear awake.
9th. Ceyx and Alcyone.
10th, 11th, and 12th. Four variations of Medea.
13th. The destruction of Niobe's children.
14th and 15th. Two designs of the Cumæan Sibyl, foretelling to Æneas his future destiny.
16th. Electra and Orestes at the Tomb of Agamemnon.

II. Two sketches of the interior of St. Peter's at Rome.

III. 1st. Thetis supplicating Jupiter.—Iliad, book 1st.
2nd and 3rd. Thetis comforting Achilles.—Iliad, book 18th.

IV. Eight sketches of females, in different characters.
1st. Una.
2nd. A Woman caressing a lap-dog.
3rd. Hebe.
4th. Psyche.
5th. Pensierosa.
6th. A Mother instructing her child.
7th. A Mother with her child in her arms, flying upon the ramparts of a city in flames.
8th. A similar subject.

V. 1st. Celadon and Amelia; from Thompson's Seasons.
2nd. Damon and Musidora; likewise from Thompson's Seasons.
3rd. The Damsel; from the ballad, "'Twas when the seas were roaring," &c. Or perhaps a personification of Sorrow.
4th. A Sibyl.

VI. Three sketches of the Lapland Witch.

VII. Three sketches from the fable of Cupid and Psyche.

VIII. 1st. The infancy of Shakspeare. Mr. Romney made a variety of designs from this subject; dear to him because he delighted

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in painting women and children, and because he almost venerated Shakspeare.

2nd. Nature unveiling herself to the Infant Shakspeare.

IX. 1st. The dying Mother, Ελκε Ταλαν. κ. τ. λ. from the Anthol. Gr.

2nd. Lear and Cordelia. Something in the style of Guercino.

3rd. Homer reciting his verses. Not unlike the manner of Rembrandt.

X. 1st. David and Saul.

2nd. A study of the head of Saul.

XI. These four studies were designed for an Altar-piece for King's College Chapel. The picture was to have been presented to the College by the Right Honourable Thomas Orde, (Lord Bolton;) but he was anticipated by the Earl of Carlisle, who gave the present Altar-piece.—The picture was in fact considerably advanced, and it is to be regretted that Lord Carlisle's donation should have prevented its completion.

XII. Shakspeare.

1st. Macbeth and Banquo.

2nd. The Weird Sisters.

3rd. Head of Edgar.—"Edgar. How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin."—King Lear.

XIII. 1st. Venus.

2nd. From Gray's Descent of Odin.

3rd. From the ballad, "'Twas when the seas were roaring."

XIV. This design might apply to either of these passages in Scripture: "And darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."—Gen. 1 ch. 2 v. "And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim."—Isaiah 25 ch. 11 v. Whatever was Mr. Romney's intention when he composed it, it

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is certainly a sublime idea: but, perhaps, too sublime for man to adventure upon.

XV. Consists of four sketches.

Two of a Mother and child.

And two of nude Children.

XVI. I do not recollect any passage from which the subject of these two designs is taken.

XVII. The subject of these eleven designs was given by Richard Cumberland, Esq., "A group of Bacchantes are assisting at the initiation of a Rustic Nymph. They assail her senses with wine, music, and dance; she hesitates; and in the moment, betwixt the allurements of pleasure, and the scruples of bashfulness, accepts the Thyrsis in one hand, and seizes the goblet with the other. Triumph and revelry possess the whole group, and every attitude of gaiety, every luxuriancy of scenery enriches, and enflames the composition."—The variety of compositions which Mr. Romney has made from it, sufficiently shews his persevering efforts to attain to perfection. And had the picture, which he actually began, and which was abandoned in consequence of some ludicrous and indelicate observations of a wit, been finished in his usual style of painting beautiful women, it would have been pre-eminent in beauty and grace.

XVIII. These two sketches which represent Fortune-telling, are similar in their composition to those of the preceding number. They are executed with masterly freedom.

XIX. The Ghost of Clytemnestra, from the Eumenides of Æschylus. The dignity of the personages, and the chaste simplicity of the composition give to this design an affecting grandeur. From the display that Mr. Romney has made of the figure of Apollo, I should conjecture that it was his intention, had he painted a

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picture on this subject, to have given such elegance and symmetry of form to the God, as would correspond with his epithet, *formosus*.

XX. These three slight sketches represent Eurydice vanishing from Orpheus.—Vide Virgil.

XXI. 1st. Harpalice, a Thracian Princess, defending her wounded father.—Bayle's Dictionary.

2nd. Paris dying, found and lamented by some mountain Nymphs. —Quintus Calaber.

3rd. A nurse, who had carelessly suffered her children to get into a boat, is terrified at their danger when she saw it part from the shore.

4th. do.

XXII. Contains two studies for the two pictures which he painted, of the Spinning Woman, and of Alope the daughter of Cercyon.

XXIII. As far as I remember, Mr. Romney said that this subject represented Hume in some domestic scene.

XXIV. This exquisite composition represents a *Dream* which Mr. Romney once had, and which he committed to paper while the impression was still strong upon his memory.

XXV. The subject of this slight sketch is, A young Girl grieving for a Fawn, which had just been killed by lightning. The back ground was to represent a past thunder-storm.

XXVI. These three designs are taken from the pastoral romance of Longus. It was the intention of Mr. Romney to have painted two pictures of the size of life, of which these were the studies. And he had prepared a place behind his painting-room to which cattle might be brought, in order that he might paint them directly from nature. It is to be regretted that other engagements at the time interfered with this scheme.

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XXVII. These eight sketches are taken from Mr. Hayley's Essay on Old-maids. A work which reflects no credit on its author, whatever merit it may have had in suggesting these designs.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and perhaps 6, are from an Antediluvean fragment, in the second volume, which offends by the affectation of scriptural language. The subjects of 7, and 8, are in the third volume, quoted from Achilles Tatius.—The Rape of Kunaza (5) is designed with all the force and spirit of Raffaelle.

XXVIII. These two designs are taken from the subjoined narrative, which I found among Mr. Romney's papers. Whether the circumstances contained in it are real or fictitious I cannot pretend to say; but the simplicity and pathos with which they are described, seem to me to give them the character of truth. It may probably be in print, but I do not recollect to have seen it. You will observe a very slight sketch of a skeleton suspended in the right corner of that design, which represents the dissecting room.

"About seventeen years ago a young woman from the country, of a very agreeable person, was servant to a man, who had all the vices attendant on the corruption of large cities. Struck with her charms, he tried all methods of seduction. She was virtuous, she resisted. Her discretion only inflamed the passion of her master, who, not being able to prevail with her, devised the blackest and most abominable revenge. He clandestinely put into her box, where she kept her clothes, several things belonging to himself, and marked with his own name; he then exclaimed he was robbed, sent for a constable, and made his deposition. When the box was opened, the effects which he claimed, were known. The poor girl, being imprisoned, had only tears for her defence; and all that she said in answer to the interrogatories, was, that she was innocent. Our criminal

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jurisprudence cannot be sufficiently condemned, when we consider that the judges had no suspicion of the wickedness of the accuser, and that they enforced the law in its utmost rigour; a rigour that is extreme, and which ought to be banished from our code, and give place to a simple chastisement, which would leave fewer robberies unpunished.

"Innocent as she was, she was condemned to be hanged. She was unskilfully executed, it being the first essay of the executioner's son. A surgeon bought the body. As he was preparing that evening to dissect it, he perceived some remains of warmth; the knife dropt from his hands, and he put into his bed her whom he was going to anatomize.

"His endeavours to restore her to life succeeded; at the same time he sent for an ecclesiastic, with whose discretion and experience he was well acquainted; as well to consult him on this strange event, as to make him a witness of his conduct. At the moment when the unfortunate girl opened her eyes she thought herself in the other world, and seeing the figure of the priest, who had a large head, and features strongly marked, (for I know him, and from him had this account,) she clasped her hands with terror, and exclaimed, *Eternal Father, you know my innocence, have mercy on me!* She did not cease to invoke the ecclesiastic, thinking she saw God himself. It was long before she could be convinced that she was not dead, so strongly the idea of punishment and death had impressed her imagination. Nothing could be more affecting, or more expressive, than this exclamation of an innocent soul, to him whom she considered as her supreme Judge; and without her endearing beauty, this sight alone was sufficient to interest strongly a man of sensibility and observation. What a picture for a painter! what a narration for a philosopher! what a lesson for a lawyer!"

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XXIX. Gil Morrice; from Percy's Reliques of ancient English Poetry.

XXX. These three designs are taken from the twelfth book of Statius' Thebaid, and represent Argia and Antigone with the dead body of Polynices.

1st. Argia and Antigone discovering one another.

2nd and 3rd. When they are admonished by Minætes of the approach of morning.—They are all conceived with much taste and feeling: the third is particularly fine, and remarkable for the beautiful effect of light.

XXXI. Four sketches, the subjects of which are not familiar to me; the fourth is slight and imperfect, but fine.

XXXII. 1st. The Grecian Daughter.

2nd. This subject was given by Mr. Hayley.—"Two elegant Girls chasing of a butterfly in a garden; the first, a girl about ten or eleven, is on the point of catching it; the elder, about seventeen, surprised and intercepted by her lover, a youth springing from a thicket."

XXXIII. These two are studies from nature, and probably what Mr. Romney had seen in his walks.—It is only by studying simple and unsophisticated nature, that an artist can acquire a pure and chaste manner.

XXXIV. This design represents a veteran Soldier endeavouring to seduce a youth from the arms of his sweet-heart, by inspiring him with ardour for military glory. The great object of the picture would have been, to depict in the countenance of the youth, the conflict of contending passions; and in that of the female, her distressed feelings as she endeavours to dissuade him.

XXXV. A Mother and two daughters; a sketch for portraits.

XXXVI. Three sketches on subjects of magic.

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1st. A Witch displaying her magical powers.

2nd and 3rd. Represent resuscitation by force of magic.

XXXVII. Shakspeare.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. These seven sketches were studies for the picture of the Tempest which Mr. Romney painted for the Boydell Gallery. "Mir. If by your art, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this roar," &c.

8th. A sketch for an intended companion to the above picture.

XXXVIII. Shakspeare.

1st. King Henry IV, act 2nd, scene 4th. "Dol Tearsheet. Captain! Thou abominable damn'd cheater," &c.—This is a very slight sketch; but it is interesting, first, because it is a specimen of Mr. Romney's manner of composing; because it is in fact a fine composition, and full of character; and because it shews that he had a correct conception of the *comique* in character. The head of Falstaff bears some resemblance to Henderson.

2nd and 3rd. Falstaff.

XXXIX. Shakspeare.

1st. Joan d' Arc and the Fiends.—Henry VI, part 1st.

2nd. Studies of the Fiends.

XL. Shakspeare.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Margery Jourdain and Bolingbroke conjuring up the Fiend.—Henry VI, part 2nd, act 1st, scene 4th.

4th and 5th. Studies of the Fiend's head.

XLI. Shakspeare. Macbeth. The subject of these three sketches is the Banquet scene and the Ghost of Banquo. Mr. Romney made another, an improvement of his former ideas, and on which his mind reposed with satisfaction; but which disappeared so suddenly as to leave suspicion of theft. The loss was very serious indeed, as it prevented him from painting a picture on this

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subject, in which he had intended to have introduced the portraits of several of his friends. He had prepared a large cartoon to draw it upon in the first place; but when he looked for the sketch in the portfolio, behold it was missing.

XLII. Shakspeare. Hecate.—Macbeth, act 3rd, scene 5th.

XLIII. Shakspeare. Macbeth, act 4th, scene 1st.—"Macbeth. Tell me thou unknown power."

1st. Represents the whole composition.

2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Are parts on a larger scale with variations. Though these sketches consist of few strokes, yet they are bold, and masterly; and indicate a mind rich in invention, and a hand powerful in execution.

XLIV. Shakspeare. Macbeth, act 4th, scene 1st. These two sketches do not represent precisely the same moment of time, but may be applied as follows.

1st. "Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo."

2nd. "And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass," &c. They combine all that constitutes excellence in design,—simplicity and grandeur of composition, powerful effect, and great force and strength of character.

XLV. Shakspeare. Four slight sketches of Titania and her Fairies.

XLVI. These nine sketches were studies for one or two large pictures which Mr. Romney intended to have painted, representing some of those scenes of human wretchedness which might be supposed to have met the eye of the philanthropist, Howard, in his perilous visits to the Lazzarettos and prisons abroad.

XLVII. These four sketches from Milton were the last Mr. Romney ever made.

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THE

FOLLOWING CARTOONS,

DESIGNED

BY GEORGE ROMNEY,

Were presented to the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1823 *by the Rev. John Romney, through its illustrious president and promoter, William Roscoe, Esq.*

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10. Eight on the subject of Cupid and Psyche.
    Two of Orpheus and Eurydice.
11. Prometheus chained, sketch.
12. Descent of Odin.
13. Medea.
14. Infant Shakspeare.
15. Birth of Shakspeare.
16. Death of Cordelia.
17. Ghost of Darius.
18. Atossa's Dream.

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APPENDIX.

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SOME PARTICULARS RESPECTING THE LIFE OF PETER ROMNEY, GATHERED FROM, OR ILLUSTRATED BY HIS OWN LETTERS.

PETER ROMNEY was born on the 1st of June, 1743, and came to study with his brother George at Kendal, at Whitsuntide, 1759, being then only sixteen years old. He continued with him till the latter went to London in March, 1762, thus making the period of his instruction somewhat less than three years, including the preparatory science of mixing and combining colours, drawing, &c. The cast of Peter's mind, and his romantic turn will appear from the following extract addressed to his brother George sometime after the latter had arrived in London. It is evidently written under temporary depression of spirits occasioned by close application to his art. While he studied with his brother, he was so addicted to scribbling verses, that it materially interfered with his professional studies; and it was therefore, deemed proper to prohibit him: it is in allusion to this circumstance that he complains. It may be proper, also, to observe that these were the effusions of a youth whose education had been

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very defective, and who had had few opportunities to cultivate his understanding.

"I never felt the loss of you so much as at present. A wretched place indeed! Not one individual to speak to the day long, or at any time else, that is worth hearing or conversing with, except Tom Walker*; and he, alas! has entered so deeply into the wilderness of trade, that he dares not cast one slight look aside, or stop one short moment in the delightful openings, when he meets with them, lest he miss the dusky path, and lose himself: and he is now gone to Chester fair, so that I am quite desolate.—When I am wearied with painting how must I recreate myself? I hardly know, for writing I have laid aside: and as for reading, there is no kind of books I can now enjoy except one, which is the easy natural.—For the philosophical strains my intellects; the droll makes my head ache with laughing; the pathetic hurts my breast and eyes with sighs and weeping; the sublime raises too much admiration, which blinds my discernment; the divine inspires me with ideas that I cannot realize, which fills me with anxiety; the melancholy wearies me with yawning; the grotesque and the dull excite my disgust; the terrible distorts delicacy; the satirical mocks humanity; and the wild and romantic gives me too much pleasure.—Milton's Lycidas, parts of his Mask, Shakspeare's As you like it, Gay's Dione, and such like, I can read with comfortable delight.—Or, if I go into the fields and woods, instead of reflecting, and tasting their beauties, I perhaps fall a weeping, which I acknowledge is a weakness.—O how lively they used to spread before me their blissful scenes, diversified with all the variety of form and colour, and tinged with the light of heaven, through which my wild imagination used to roam in the days when I indulged

* A brother of Adam Walker.

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too charming poetry.—But now stern necessity has deprived me of the liberty of that pleasure.—I cannot bear to think of it.—But I must be content.

"Is Jim Fisher of a melancholy disposition? I thought him so by his letter to Mr. Pennington, which I had the pleasure to read. It is like as if the points of his ideas were knocked off by some constraint.—I mean his powers are confined within too mean and narrow bounds; and when he gives loose to his genius he is like an eagle tethered, or within a house of glass, so that when he rises transported with some noble object, the string plucks him back, or he runs against the transparent walls.—Pity never appears to me more ready than upon occasions like this.—That a man endowed with noble capabilities (for such I take Fisher to be) should be obliged to listen to, and obey the barren and minute dictates of necessity.—The station only of a mere sensitive being.—For servitude is a worse clog than even poverty or adversity to a man of parts.—O no! poverty, comparatively speaking, is a spacious field for a noble minded man to exert himself in; adversity, however, is. But a servile situation hurts a man's spirit far more than either of these. And, if I may believe Homer, who preferred liberty to life;

"Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
Made man a slave, took half his worth away."

His detestation of servility was, perhaps, the cause of his being a beggar; for one may perceive by his works, that he denies any greatness except what proceeds from the nobility of the soul.

"If you write to my brothers at Lancaster, it must be within a fortnight; otherwise they will be gone out. They have delayed coming so long that I do not now expect them.

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"For God's sake do not confine yourself too much, I cannot think such very close study as you represent yours to be, is the most profitable; but my notions upon that subject are, perhaps, none of the best."

Peter remained at Kendal about a year longer, prosecuting his studies with diligence, and occasionally painting portraits for a guinea a head. He also employed himself in making compositions; particularly on a Family picture, which I regret was never finished. It was on a three-quarters canvass, painted longitudinally. It represented Mr. and Mrs. Romney standing together in the centre of the picture, he with his left arm resting lightly upon her left shoulder, both looking complacently; they were very like, though Mr. Romney was painted from memory aided by the unfinished crayon-portrait which he himself had begun. He had a snuff coloured coat, and she was represented in a fancy dress of white satin. Mrs. Romney's mother was seated on the right side of the picture with her granddaughter standing by her; and the left was occupied by my portrait, standing, and drawing a man's head upon a rock with chalk; the figure was formal, and dressed in a suit of blue, which made me dislike it. The background was wild scenery of rocks and waterfalls. The sudden death of the beautiful and interesting little girl, then just three years old, threw all into disorder and confusion; the picture was abandoned forever; the domestic establishment broken up, and its members separated. The picture was kept by Mrs. Romney's sister and given to me more than forty years ago. As it was not a producible picture on account of its unfinished state, I cut it up, and only kept the portrait of the venerable old lady, who was about eighty years old when painted. I have it still, and appreciate it highly; for, besides the tie of consanguinity, it is linked to my feelings by many

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tender associations. Her physiognomy is very pleasing, and handsome for a woman of her years. It is admirably coloured, and, considering all circumstances, an extraordinary production, sufficient to justify all the expectations that were then entertained of his future eminence—why they were not realized the sequel will shew.

When his brother visited the north in 1765, he took Peter back with him to London in order that he might have better opportunities of improving himself; but as he had not the means of maintenance there, he was soon obliged to return to his father's house. While he remained at home, having brought with him a few prints after Bergham, Vernet, &c., which he had picked up in London, he employed himself in copying them, and in making some compositions of his own. With these, after having stopped a short time at Ulverston, he proceeded to Lancaster in the beginning of 1767; and there, having formed a sufficient collection, he disposed of them by lottery, after the example of his brother. He also painted some portraits during his stay in that town. Being now furnished with a supply of money in consequence of his lottery, he advanced boldly to Manchester, where he may properly be said to have commenced his short career as a portrait painter.

While he resided at Ulverston he wrote the three following letters to his friend Cockin*, which, together with some others, have come

* William Cockin was born at Burton in Kendal, was a teacher of writing and arithmetic, and the author of the following works.

A rational and practical Treatise of Arithmetic in two parts, octavo.
Occasional attempts in verse, octavo.
Essay on the Doctrine of the Syphon.
The art of delivering Written Language. Dedicated to David Garrick, Esq., octavo.
Ode to the Genius of the Lakes, quarto.

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into my possession since the death of that gentleman. They are written with much frankness and sincerity, and therefore exhibit a correct portrait of his mind. And though they are the productions of an unpractised youth, they nevertheless display considerable talent, and give strong indications of genius; which, had it been duly fostered and encouraged, would, no doubt, have led to fame and fortune. It is evident that he had a correct taste, and a just perception of what is excellent in art; and this too when the arts in England had hardly begun to raise themselves from their groveling state.

Ulverston, Augt. 26th, 1766.

"Dear Mr. Cockin,

"If you remember how, when I saw you last, I begged you not to fail in answering my letters, you will wonder that I should be so long in sending the first. Indeed it is the first time I have had opportunity, and ability; nor have I the last yet (or at least something necessary) to write as I could wish; so you will take what comes as it may happen to arise, order its ill-placed parts in your own mind, cor-

The fall of Scepticism and Infidelity predicted; an epistle (in verse) to Doctor Beattie, octavo.

The Freedom of Human Action explained, octavo.

A Paper in the Philosophical Transactions, read before the Royal Society.

The Rural Sabbath, a poem: posthumously published.

—Which shew the versatility of his talents.

He was deeply read in divinity, and his practical conduct was consistent with his learning; for a more meek and benevolent creature never graced humanity. His virtues were almost without alloy. His elocution was mild and impressive, and he could talk on all subjects of literature and taste with great fluency and judgment. He was the friend of Doctor Dawson, the celebrated mathematician of Sedbergh, a man of similar manners and character: and of the Rev. T. Wilson, late master of Clitheroe school; who was also distinguished for literary talents and taste, as his playful verses on the Birch sufficiently testify.

It is curious to observe how men of genius, though thinly scattered in society, get linked together, as it were by a certain mysterious sympathy and attraction.

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rect the wrong and finish the deficient. But I may justly despair of reaching your taste, when I must have not only much time, but strong and clear perceptions, to write up to my own; or if you will, to reduce, or digest, a dancing multitude of things to what I only admire, and what I call—*Virgin Simplicity.*—Which I make my motto, as I apprehend it to be not only a true criterion of all compositions; but the most faithful guide to every thing worthy the pursuit of the human mind. For I have found by various experiments, that nothing has prevented my success in any study so much as an erroneous notion that the mysteries of nature and of science must be extremely intricate in themselves, and hard to comprehend even after discovered. Hence I searched for them in curious and extraordinary places, wandering from the pleasant simple path where they surely lie, till vexation and despair compelled me to give up, or return: when I was often very greatly surprised to find what I sought where I least of all expected it. But as twenty pages would be scarce sufficient to contain the various illustrations I could give of my text, I will here drop the subject, and give you a description of a number of critics, by whom I have been pestered, and diverted, both here and at other places.

"The first sort that presents itself, are those, who, having perhaps read some flimsy French authors on taste, heard of Hogarth's line of beauty, and seen a few of Reynold's prints, condemn all pictures that are not twisted, loose, and careless. The next are those who having gathered their ideas from dancing masters, boarding schools, and some of Cranke's, or Hudson's pictures, admire only such as are neat, formal, upright, and at some stiff kind of employment.

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"A third, who have, perhaps, been in Italy, and seen a number of very old, brown paintings, think none valuable that are not half obscured by smoke and dust. These again are contrasted by a set, whose criterion of judging is derived from Chinese figures with carmine cheeks, and from painted actresses; and who condemn all as looking dirty, which are not uniformly fair, and bright as a tulip. A fifth sort having seen some of Vandyck's faded pictures, are quite offended if a painting have any shadow in it; whilst an advocate for Rembrandt admires no picture but what is too dark to distinguish what it represents. The first of these would even condemn a night piece for being dark and obscure; and the latter a day-light for being clear and distinct. I have met with some critics so far carried away with the idea of a rough, slight, and bold style in painting, as to censure a picture of Venus and Adonis for its delicacy, softness, and high finishing; and others, on the contrary, such admirers of the latter style, as to condemn a heroic piece for being rough, slight, and bold.

"The next sort I remember, are those, who gather their principles from painted flies, fruit, flowers, and other pieces of still-life, and lifeless productions; who are always enamoured of little, minute pieces, and parts of things, such as buttons, button-holes, lace, finger nails, fretted sleeves, and knots of ribands; and who immediately dislike the picture in which they cannot discover these beauties: whilst an opposite set, deeply learned in half finished pieces, designs, drawings, &c., observe only the whole effect; and if there be two or three objects in an obscure part of the picture, and the rest tinged with a broad light, they esteem it an admirable piece. The first of these would prefer a picture of Cranke's* with a fine finished finger

* Cranke was a respectable provincial painter, and from the pictures I have seen, not much inferior to Hudson.

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nail to one by Reynolds without it: and the latter, any kind of miserable sketch, to a piece finished according to its true character: this, however, is the test, by which every subject should be tried and judged; but it is a thing they never dream of, nor would it be possible by any means to make them understand it. You will perceive that the false and ridiculous judgments of those various sorts of critics do not proceed so much from entire ignorance, (though that perhaps would be more tolerable,) as from their knowing a little, and thence vainly concluding that they comprehend every thing. Absurd as this vanity is, I think there are scarcely two persons out of two hundred that are free from it: it affords an abundant source for the ridiculous, in which my friend C———, if I am not much mistaken, would greatly excel, if he could be induced to cultivate that talent. —But I must take advantage of this remaining corner, to request that you will not be so long in answering this letter as I have been in writing. I am curious to know what you are doing, and what you have done since I saw you; and if you would be kind enough to satisfy my curiosity, you would much oblige

"Your affectionate friend

"And humble servant,

"PETER ROMNEY."

Ulverston, September 6th, 1766.

"Dear Mr. Cockin,

"Having been out of Ulverston, I did not receive your letter before last night, the impressions of which, after reading it a second time this morning, act upon my mind in such a manner, as to induce me to give it an immediate answer, and to which the opportunity of Sunday, I hope, affords no objection. The frank, though I think much too humble account, which you give of yourself, and the generous con-

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struction you put upon my long neglect of writing to you, compel me to confess, that it was not so much occasioned by my being wholly engaged, either with cultivations for the future, or with employment of the present, as by an inability to write any thing which I thought would give either profit or pleasure, or rather a higher opinion of my abilities. This is the spur, I believe, that determined me to write at last; and which has, and will continue to stimulate to what the world calls the most noble and heroic actions. And however meanly you may think of it, I would not have you utterly to despise it; for whatever ideal philosophers and enthusiasts may advance about doing good and excellent things purely for the sake of doing them, I have a notion that this would often prove but a feeble motive if not accompanied by the hopes of distinction. I do not affirm that your want of exertion is occasioned by your having put too heavy a yoke upon this human instigator; though you may, perhaps, infer that such is my opinion, particularly when you have read the following assertion from Spencer's Fairy Queen.—The mind that is pregnant with glorious intentions can never rest till it has brought them forth.

"Though you compliment me on the happiness of my notions on simplicity, yet give me leave to observe, that you do not seem to feel the beauty of the image from whence I drew the epithet, with that rapture I could have wished; which I account for by supposing that you have not associated so many endearing ideas to the name of Virgin as I have: in which if I am carried to a degree of prejudice, like that of those critics, whom I briefly mentioned to you in my last, (who judge of all sorts of pictures, poems, &c., by one and the same criterion, without any reference to character;) do not look upon it otherwise, than as a natural and temporary delusion, which, perhaps, may be too soon removed by the severe instructions of experience.

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For when I hear a simple virgin mentioned, I do not conceive the idea of a plain, cold, insipid, unfeeling girl—no—there arises in my mind an elegant, graceful, beauteous form, endowed with a soul as pure as light; so warmed with truth, generosity, and affection, as to breathe through every pore, producing a blush that shames the lily tinged with the colours of the rose: and which being mingled with smiles, glows unrivalled by art or nature.

"Now laying aside partiality, and considering the chief end of painting, &c., to be, to give pleasure, what model in nature can be found so likely to be studied for producing that end? But it is only the judicious application of those studies, which can render them valuable; for instance, if the principles derived from studying such a model, were indiscriminately applied to a heroic subject, how ridiculous it would be! They are not to be used like the prescription of a quack, which professes to cure every disorder; but must be administered like a genuine medicine by a legitimate professor, who always considers the season, situation, constitution, sex, and age of his patient; which requires a deep and delicate discernment into the nature and character of his subject; the result of bright parts, wide knowledge, and long experience.*—How near I may come to the excellence you call critical, and how highly obtain that science and invention, which you say is necessary to form a good allegory, I cannot pretend to foresee; but to be able to invent a perfect picture demands such united force of labour, genius, and opportunity, that I greatly fear they will never all so far concur, as to give me the possession of such ability.

* Cockin was a metaphysical writer, and as there is little affinity between metaphysics and painting, I do not wonder that Peter felt some difficulty in combining the abstract reasonings of the philosopher with the visible creations of his own imagination.

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It is very trifling to invent in a scattered and disordered manner, without regard to time, place, unity, expression, and character; but it is something indeed very extraordinary, to produce a full, clear, united, and interesting subject; and to adorn it with the most emphatic and characteristic beauties in such a manner, as to render it at once striking, charming, and instructive. I say nothing of the mere mechanical parts of painting, as I conceive them to be an easy consequence of the other, though both painters and critics make such a clamour about them. And why do they? Because therein lie their chief excellencies; the first in producing, and the latter in discovering them. Yet I would not have you to understand that I despise or neglect those mechanical parts of art—*by no means*—only it vexes me when I see them placed uppermost, instead of being regarded as subservient to the other; which is surely a most degrading inversion of true science: it is just the same as preferring the hand-writing of a letter to the sense it contains; which indeed I have often seen done, even when the sense has been clever, and the writing but tolerable. What numbers of pictures there are wrought up to the highest perfection that the united force of drawing and colouring can carry them; which yet have no effect, considered either as a pleasing group of objects, or an interesting subject pathetically expressed, or truly characterized! All their beauties consist in their parts being very like in form and colour to what they were intended to represent—which parts are, perhaps, a number of inelegant objects, scattered as it were by accident, up and down, without connexion or meaning, general or particular.—Painters seem not to know that painting is no more than a pleasing vehicle, or means of conveying the beauties of nature to the mind; otherwise they would never certainly prefer the *vehicle* or *means*, to the *matter conveyed*, and the *end*.—I fancy it is much the same in poetry, which seems not to be regarded as the

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drapery of truth and philosophy which should never be sacrificed for mere embellishment; no more than a leg or arm of a man in a picture should be maimed or cut off, to make room for some elegant folds of drapery; a thing I have more than once seen done. Poetry as well as painting, however, if judiciously and finely managed, is, no doubt, as capable of adorning and heightening truth and philosophy, as dress the human figure; the effects of which, in the present state of society, all, who are not stupidly prejudiced, must allow to be very powerful indeed, particularly when disposed with exquisite taste.

"Thus have I expressed myself as clearly as I am able, in disclosing the nature of some things, which, though not immediately consequential to your letter, are what have often given me pain in considering. And after speaking in such an absolute manner, (which I would alter if I had time,) will you not think it odd of me, to desire you to correct what you may judge amiss, and to give me your sentiments as they may arise on your perusal? I would not have you to sacrifice what you *honestly think* to any kind of complaisance. The reason for this hint is nothing more than a desire which I have to know what is really right and true as nearly as I possibly can; for I frequently find my confidence fail when my certainty is rendered any way doubtful; which has subjected me to strange sufferings in my own mind, whereof you may probably have a lively sense from your own feelings.

"It does not give me so much pleasure as you might at first imagine—people's hopes of what I may hereafter produce—because I know that hopes of this description are always too sanguine ever to be perfectly realized. I would, if I could, act in such a manner as

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never to raise expectations which I could not more than satisfy. This often prevents me from even pretending to what is my *right*, and from pushing myself as much as I might do. As nothing would mortify me more than to solicit a person to sit for his picture, and after that, not be able to please him.—So that my business is, to do (nearly) as well as I can, and if that answers—it may—if not—it is only the very last necessity that can force me to use any other persuasions.

"I have had a great number of visitors, among whom I have only picked up four; and whether I shall have any more or not, I cannot tell; but it is what I scarcely expect.—I find this place not so convenient for prosecuting the scheme of improvement I told you of when I saw you, as I supposed. I am, it is true, my own master; clear from that multiplicity of manners, &c., which is very apt to mislead from the true model, (to wit,) nature judiciously chosen.—Yet this convenience is far outweighed by the advantages, and opportunities of improvement, which London affords beyond the country. The want of company is a disagreeable circumstance, for I can find none but what are extremely shallow in the polite arts, except Doctor Scales*, whom I very seldom see. Mr. Kendal is very clever, but he is rather smart than sensible. My only two companions are Mr. Williamson† and Dr. Fell‡, both great in their respective ways, which unluckily happen not to be of the kind I should choose. But to supply this inconvenience, do not fail to write as often, and as much as opportu-

* The Rev. Mr. Scales, B. D., (commonly called Doctor Scales,) then minister of Ulverston, and formerly a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge; an elegant minded man, and of gentlemanly manners.

† Williamson the associate of his brother George when at Dalton.

‡ A very respectable medical practitioner, who through a long life had the chief business of Ulverston and its neighbourhood.

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nity and your own ease will suffer you; which favour will be very thankfully acknowledged, and I hope some day duly recompensed by

"Dear sir,

"Your sincere friend and humble servant,

"PETER ROMNEY."

"If not so good, so much the more of it,"—would not, I think, be ill applied to my letter; the length of which I hope you will excuse, and the next time, I will strive to put what I have to say in less room, and likewise make it more legible if I can.

"Brother Lawrence* being with me all day of Monday, made me miss the carrier."

Ulverston.

"Dear Cockin,

"Wherever my letter may end, it shall, in the manner of Pindar, begin from Jove, whom (without being profane) I hope I may suppose the great Author of the universe. Through all the parts of which yet laid open to us, does he not appear to act upon *principles* most admirably simple? Therefore I conclude that it must be the same kind of *principles*, which ought to direct any one in discovering them, as well as in imitating them with success, or in judging truly of the merit of those imitations. Hence the philosopher, the artist, and the critic ought never to transgress the laws of simplicity, lest they wander from the right, and miss their intended aim. For whatever discoveries we fancy we accomplish, whatever fond imitations of nature we produce, or whatever vain observations on these imitations

* This excellent young man died in the West Indies.

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we make, if they be not all effected under the conduct of simplicity, and squared thereby, they will, fifty to one, be false or frivolous. There are two strong instances in proof of the first, I mean the notions that the sun rolled round the world to cause day and night, and galloped some millions of degrees north and south, to produce summer and winter. Which, by the bye, is just like turning the fire round the roasting goose, or moving the whole grate this way and that, in order to roast both neck and tail, instead of letting the spit run oblique to the fire, thus ⟋ and thus ⟍. Now if my model had been known and referred to, these supposed discoveries would have been found quite inconsistent therewith, and consequently false, whatever appearances might plead in their favour.

"To hint a demonstration of the influence that simplicity should have in works of art, and in criticism, I will remind you of one instance among a thousand, illustrating it in both; that is, the elegy in a country church yard, by Gray; in which, if the bard had known simplicity to have been the *very last* thing whose bounds he should have transgressed, he never would have forsook it in so important a part as the conclusion. Nor would (my friend*) the critic have ob-

* He seems to allude to some criticism of Cockin's, in which he had censured Gray for his egotism and affectation. That such were Cockin's sentiments will appear from the following observations in his own hand writing, which I found in Mason's Memoirs of Gray, and which probably were written when he visited Mr. Romney in 1795.—Having long before detected this infirmity in Gray, he was thus able to supply the defective words, which Mason, who should have known him better, was not.

" Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy *impart*
And as their pleasing influence *flows confest*,
A sigh of soft reflection *heave the heart*.

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served this transgression, had he not either known simplicity to be the first principle of poetry, or at least felt it to be such. I need not tell you that we often, if not always, feel beauties and faults before we are aware of their causes. Thus much for the term *simplicity*, which of itself I thought imperfect, as I fancied it would lead the mind *only* to the naked skeleton, or undecorated design; as, for example, to that plain, uniform, and single sickly coloured edifice you mentioned in your letter; and thus hinder it from being so universal as I at first intended it; for I meant it to be exactly like nature herself, who always appears adorned, and that too in the most endearing manner imaginable: I therefore, sought for an epithet to tag to it, in order to embellish and beautify it as much as possible, without its being inconsistent with, or counteracting its due effect; and after rummaging all nature through, *Virgin* appeared the most effectual term I could meet with, not only as it implies the most perfect purity and

Of the above stanza, which forms the last of a copy of verses to *Mr. Bentley*, by *Gray*, (see page 228 of Mason's Life,) his ingenious editor observes in a note, as follows.—"A corner of the only manuscript copy, which Mr. Gray left of this fragment, is unfortunately torn; and though I have endeavoured to supply the chasm, I am not quite satisfied with the words which I have inserted in the third line. I print my additions in italics, and shall be much pleased if my reader finds a better supplement to this imperfect stanza." That the supplemental words here alluded to are neither tuneable enough for the author, forcible enough for the conclusion of the piece, (as, after all, there is reason to think the stanza was,) nor in fact, what he really wrote, I fancy every judge of Gray's poetry will allow—Below another conclusion is offered; but whether it may be better *guessed*, it is not for the guesser to determine. He will only *first* remark, that he is strongly persuaded the final word of all was the poet's own name; and *secondly*, remind the reader, that this feeling poet seemed to have a singular pleasure in saying something respecting *himself* in his verses, as may be seen, at least, in *three* other of his poems.

Enough for me if to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy *convey;*
And as their pleasing influence *is impress,*
A sigh of soft reflection *heave for Gray.*"

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beauty, but also every other truly amiable quality that uncorrupted humanity is susceptible of. Hence virgin simplicity. In what I have here said on the old subject, I do not strive in the way of controversy, (that not being my business,) to confute, or in the least invalidate what you or others may have said in opposition to my notions; nor to illustrate what you or they may have advanced in my favour: I have only attempted to give you as plain and comprehensive an idea of what I mean *in general*, as I can, without entering into particulars; as I conceive them to arise in consequence, like the various branches of a vegetable from its seed, whose flourishing depends in various degrees on the genius of the soil in which it is sown. For however genuine the seed may be, if the soil be barren, the crop will surely be nothing.—Whither do I wander?—I was not aware of being put to the explaining of myself to any one upon a subject which I regarded solely as useful and just in my own applications, without once thinking how to vindicate myself to another. Do you believe it possible to be absolutely convinced of the truth of a matter, without being able to defend, or even to explain its nature? This is what I am—I will tell you how.—My mind, with perfect honesty, simply for the sake of discovering how things *really* are, often, as it were, without my being sensible of it, rummages through the utmost heights, depths, and limits of things, turning them impartially on every side, and observing all their various aspects, and internal qualities, together with all their properties general and particular, their difference likewise and relations; after which, having made proper deductions, allowances, &c., and summed up the several real values of each side together, the balance, or *real worth* of what I was in search of, remains in my memory, whilst perhaps, every step of the operation, or the means by which I accomplished my conclusion, and the reason I had for it, are entirely vanished beyond the power, not only of being

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repeated, but of recollection. For, as I told you, my mind sets to work of its own accord; and it is a common observation, that we are able to do things voluntarily, which necessity cannot compel us to do; the reason of which I shall not here strive to explain: but I think sufficient has been said to convince you, that one may be certain, (as far as human certainty can go,) of things, without being able to justify, or explain them; which is very often my case, and particularly in this of virgin simplicity, for the reasons I have already hinted. For I do remember that it was the clear conclusion of a great and extensive operation of the whole united powers of my mind; though the process is almost entirely sunk in oblivion; and what I have said, both now and before, about it, are only bits of scattered parts, which by accident I recollect, or very imperfectly work out from the confused mass that remains.

"I owe you a large acknowledgment for the deep and elegant, though you say, unpremeditated essay on simplicity; only I could have wished it less philosophical, or rather, that my own mind had been more refined and susceptible of the beauty of abstract and metaphysical reasoning; for sentiments, however just in themselves, and in their expression, if they be not illustrated by a number of striking figures and allusions, &c., so that they rise like pictures to my imagination, I never can, without a very close and often repeated perusal, perfectly understand.

"When imagination is predominant, without the greatest care my understanding is led blind, and I am carried into strange extravagancies, and seeming contradictions, which I strive in vain to reconcile by any kind of reasoning; till my judgment, feeling the reality of the case, disperses the errors which imagination had raised,

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and brings me back to the place from whence I first began to wander. Thus are all my cloudy castles dissolved to air by my understanding, which is so strong as never to be very long deceived by the illusions of fancy; whilst on the other hand, the latter is too active ever to suffer the former to carry its dominion to the last extremity: so that my imagination and my judgment reciprocally mislead and correct each other; which is the simple cause that will, I believe, unravel all the inconsistencies of character in my letters, &c., and tell why I am at intervals, both a libertine, a sage, and an honest man.—Always to be the last is the greatest desire of,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"PETER ROMNEY."

"P. S.—Pardon the strangeness of this letter, for my heart is in such a tumult, and so distracted about an affair I have lately been engaged in, that I scarce know what I either do or say."

Peter's warm imagination, refined feelings, and romantic turn of mind rendered him peculiarly liable to the tender impressions of love. While he lodged at Williamson's, an artful female, who visited there, by her affected simplicity of manners, and specious modesty, had the address to insinuate herself into his heart; and had nearly, like Circe of old, entangled him in her snares. As soon as her mask was taken off, and he became undeceived, he immediately quitted Ulverston; but she followed him to Lancaster and Manchester, and so annoyed him, that he was obliged to have recourse to a magistrate to have her removed. She afterwards assumed his name, pretended to be his wife, and under that character incurred much debt. Williamson was severely censured for giving countenance to the intercourse. It

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is evident that the two last letters were written while his mind was under this delusion. The following two, addressed to the same friend a few months after Peter's arrival at Manchester, shew that the enchantment was broken, but not without leaving some painful reflections behind. The second will also give the reader a tolerable idea of the many mortifications and disappointments which usually attend a portrait painter in a provincial town; especially before his professional character is established.

Manchester, August 22nd, 1767.

"Dear Mr. Cockin,

"Having long owed you a letter, I now make free to pay it, though you, perhaps, may not count me any thanks for it; as I have reason to apprehend that my character may be under disgrace from the connexions I have had with that girl, with whom we drank tea the last time I saw you. Yet I flatter myself you are too well acquainted with the falsehood, or, at least, exaggeration of common reports, to give credit to them should they go against me; therefore I hope I may continue to enjoy your former regard, and to address you with my usual freedom, till you find me as worthless and base (as some I know would gladly make me) from incontestible proofs; for I conceive you to be too just and generous, to decide so grand a point as that of a person's character, from any thing less convincing.

"Were it possible for me, in the compass of a letter, to relate the whole of what has passed between that girl and me, you might then see clearly how to balance the account; but, as that cannot be, I hope, notwithstanding any odium that may have been thrown upon me in consequence of my intimacy with *her*, you will take me on my word, that I am in general innocent, till I have an opportunity of

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convincing you more fully. Not that I pretend to justify myself in all respects; for, though the first and principal motive for my concerning myself with her was to do her real service; (as I fancied her simplicity rendered her subject to be much deceived, and imposed upon;)—yet, I must confess, others of a baser kind would now and then interpose, for which I shall ask no quarter besides what your judgment freely allows. Nor shall I conceal any thing from you when I see you, as I am sensible it is more pleasant to disclose the truth, however reprehensible that truth might be, than to bear its pangs about under the insupportable veil of reserve and dissimulation. What is now become of the wretched girl I really cannot tell; but I understand she has made her escape from the constable at Warrington, who should have taken her to her own parish under a vagrant pass, for roaming about the country without money and clothes, and borrowing things on false pretences, and in people's names who had no connexion with her.

"It was this girl, who from time to time till this present hour, prevented me from writing to you and answering your last letter, which I have now not only lost, but forgot its contents.

"I return you thanks for your subscription*, and should have been glad if you had got something: though there was nothing which I could wish in the possession of a person of taste; yet it would have afforded me great pleasure if you had gained something in return for your kindness. But Fortune, who is known to be not over kind in dispensing her favours, and who often seems to take a pleasure in thwarting our dearest anxieties, only behaved in her usual manner.

* Mr. Cockin was a subscriber to his lottery at Lancaster.

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"I fancy my brother George is with you before this; as I understood from the last letter I had from London, that he meant to be at Lancaster about, or before this time.

"I should be very glad to have a line from you the first opportunity, with a sketch of current reports about me and the unhappy girl, as I suppose the affair is too singular to be confined in private; yet it may admit of a query whether you know much about it though it be public, if you continue to indulge your love of solitude and scenery as much as you used to do. The pleasures resulting from such a life are, perhaps, more tranquil and certain than those enjoyed in more tumultuous scenes; yet I must say with Brutus, that I would not forego the *noble feelings of the heart,* excited in active life, with all the attendant perturbations, for whatever I have yet enjoyed of still and solitude.

"I have been here about two months, and so far employed; and I am not without hopes of further encouragement. My love to my brother if he be come, and my compliments to Mr. Collinson and Mr. Ashburner. With sincerest wishes for your health and happiness,

"I am, dear sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"PETER ROMNEY."

Manchester, October 7th, 1767.

"Dear Mr. Cockin,

"I wrote to you (I have forgot exactly how long since,) but, however it is so long that if something particular had not happened, I think you might have answered me before this.—To what must I

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attribute your silence? To want of opportunity? No.—Perhaps you never got my letter: that is scarcely probable.—To want of health? I hope not.—To a dislike you have to writing to me? I will not believe it.—And surely you cannot be so formal as to suffer eight or nine months to slide away before you seize your pen, merely because I did. Heaven forbid you should have the same cause for neglecting to answer my letter so long, that I had, yours.

"Thus far I wrote before I received your friendly and generous letter, which raised emotions in my breast which I have not often been acquainted with. Were it not that I am well assured of the sincerity of your heart, I should impute the profusion of encomiums you lavish upon me, to other causes than the warmth of your friendship and generosity; since heaven knows I merit none such. And yet, I confess, it gave me inexpressible pleasure to think that the person whose esteem I value above all others, could find any reason to induce him to honour me with them. Nor would they suffer the consciousness of *not* deserving them, to throw any damp upon their influence; but inspired me with the adventurous hopes of one day deserving (by God's assistance) what I now know myself so far unworthy of, and thereby securing my friend from being suspected of mistaken zeal or flattery, and myself from the sharp reproofs of conscience.

"I am sorry my brother* has so poor a prospect of business; mine, I can assure you, is nothing to boast of. It is true I have been hitherto employed, but I have very faint expectations for the future; though very few people in this town have had their portraits painted, and though they are in general very rich; but this latter circumstance,

* This was just after he had come to Lancaster, before the influx of business had begun to pour upon him.

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is counterbalanced by their fondness for money. In the pieces I have finished I have done my very best, and they who have seen them, think them all very like.

"What should I do? I had recourse to other methods, and am justly punished for my attempts; though they were always made upon people who had more money than they had wisdom to make good use of it, which I thought would, in some measure, palliate the meanness of the stratagems I practised upon them, to draw them into my sitting-chair.—The first I fixed upon for this purpose, was a lady of wit, beauty, and distinction—all which I did not fail to let her know, though it was unnecessary, as she knew them already; but as the being told of certain things that one knows, is said to be still agreeable, so it proved in her case.—But I dwelt chiefly upon her beauty, (which in truth is very extraordinary for her age,) in hopes of inspiring her with a desire of transmitting it to posterity; which, at length, she declared was her intention when she went to London; adding, that when it was done, it should be by the *first painter* in the kingdom.—The next was, also, a lady, whose only objection to sitting was, that she thought she should not make a good picture.—Though she was very graceful and genteel in her person; yet her face was no way remarkable, except for the sensibility of her looks. This I made a handle of, and assured her, that it was not so much the complexion or form of the face, as the expression of the countenance and the gracefulness of the attitude, that made a fine picture; which excellencies, I told her, she was possessed of in a most remarkable degree.—Very likely, says she, (reddening while she spoke,) but the form and complexion, which you set so light by, are the principal circumstances, I fancy, that contribute to the likeness; and I assure you I should despise my picture, however graceful the attitude, and fine the ex-

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pression, if it was not extremely like. This answer, and the manner in which it was delivered, put me past the power of attempting to convince her that I did not mean to slight her form and complexion, which I too plainly saw she imagined.—Thus was I a second time defeated.—Yet I had the hardihood to try again; which was upon a lady likewise, of great endowments, whose only objection, she said, was the colour of her hair. And while she hesitated, I, in hopes of prevailing upon her, told her that the greatest painters had always painted their Madonnas with red hair, which was a proof that they regarded it as the most beautiful.—Well, says she, (with an affected laugh,) and so you call my hair *red*, do you? I am much obliged to you for the title you give it; but it is neither red, nor shall you ever make it so.—Thus you see how I frustrated the object of my designs by the very means I made use of in order to obtain it.—If a person would succeed by flattery, &c., he must not be over delicate; but speak with all the assurance of conscious sincerity, and praise alike, both beauties and faults, but *chiefly* the faults, which forms a charm irresistible. But that is above my reach.—I made several other trials, notwithstanding my disappointments, upon both men and women; but met with a general answer,—that they had no money to spare upon such things. Except, indeed, three or four, who were prevailed upon, and who have disappointed me five times within the last fortnight. The first is a very good-natured, but at the same time, a very thoughtless gay young fellow. I met him one evening, and he told me he would wait on me the next morning at nine. The hour came, but he never appeared. I sent a boy to remind him of his engagement, who was told that he had taken a sail down the Duke's canal with some gentlemen and ladies. A second time he fixed upon a morning, and came; but told me (indicating at the same time by his gestures some haste) that he could only stay a quarter of an hour.

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I told him that would not do. Well, says he, the winter mornings are so short that I can spare no time, but I will wait on you on Sunday morning at seven o'clock. Eight, nine, &c. came, but he never made his appearance, neither did he send any message, nor have I seen him since. Another young fellow, stupid enough, came at eight one morning to bid me prepare for him against nine. I did so accordingly; but he, in the usual manner, never came till four in the afternoon; and all his apology was, that he had a letter to write which kept him till eleven, when he thought it was too late. The third was a widower, and a kind of deist, both in opinion and practice; he met me yesterday, and told me that a person of great judgment who had seen his picture, said that it was too young and handsome, and besides, had too long a nose, and too straight a face; he, therefore, was determined to sit another time, and would call upon me at nine this morning. He, however, not appearing at the time, I went half an hour after to look for him, and found him in his morning gown and velvet cap, looking over some old parchments, which he said he had found the preceding night as he was rummaging among his papers; and that on looking into one of them, he found its contents of some importance, which determined him to examine them thoroughly the first thing he did; and that he would wait on me the next Sunday morning. My patience was so nearly overcome, that, to conceal the struggle in my mind, I immediately withdrew, leaving him and his ridiculous parchments, which it grieved me sore to see preferred to myself. You will not wonder then, when I tell you, that I am determined for the future, to leave every person to his own inclinations, and no longer sacrifice myself to meanness; to be only slighted by others, and despised by myself.

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"There is one Pickering, who lives altogether in this town, a face-painter, and a second Cranke; but who neither draws nor colours so well. He is, in short, a mere old woman in painting, and is quite adapted to the Manchester people, who are old women in every thing, except trade and manufactures. This you will think is dictated by a spirit of disappointment; but I believe it will be found true, taking the people in general.

"I do not know whether you will be able to read my letter, however, not to lengthen it more, I conclude with my sincere wishes for your health and happiness.

"I am your affectionate humble servant,

"PETER ROMNEY."

"P. S.—My love to my brother, and shall be glad to hear from him, and yourself, the first opportunity; for nothing would be more agreeable, as I keep but little, or no company; indeed I cannot meet with any to my mind."

In a subsequent letter, without date, but evidently written in the spring of 1768, he again says,—"Pickering has attempted to ruin my reputation by a stratagem, which, though trite, is as subtile as art could devise, being the most powerful against me, while at the same time it has the least appearance of spite: it is no other than this—"*that my paintings will not stand, but presently lose their lustre, and grow flat as a pancake.*" By this base assertion, you will perceive that he sets void all merit; for it avails nothing whatever excellencies my pictures may possess, if they vanish almost immediately like a cloud of smoke. But no more of so unworthy an object, let him brood and bring forth what will only hurt himself, but honour me."

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He continues; "I mean to embrace the first cessation from employment here, and travel northward; but as I have new pictures coming in every week, I do not know when that may happen.

"What is the reason that I cannot think of you without conceiving that your mind is at work with some composition or other. However you may pretend to be indolent, I cannot by any means persuade myself that you can be happy without frequently complying with the suggestions of your genius. There is a moral reason for it. It would hurt your conscience to resist the impulse of those talents, which nature has bestowed upon you for the pleasure and profit of mankind. Because it would be ungrateful. The meek opinion you entertain of yourself is a faint plea, and will not justify your not attempting; for not even those who have had the greatest success, could have known before they tried, what they could do.—Therefore banish, as Shenstone says, the self-debasing principle. Humility has depressed many a genius into a hermit, but never yet raised one into a poet of eminence. He further says, he fears that humility is to genius as an extinguisher to a candle.—From this you will perceive that I either believe you are at work with something, or would fain have you to be so. You have attempted and succeeded—what greater encouragement would you have to attempt again? However indifferent you may be to the things of this world, fame must be sweet to you; and though you have acquired it as far as you are known, (the greatest no further,) you must not expect from what you have done, to preserve it without fresh supplies; since, as Shakspeare says, perseverance only keeps honour bright; to have done, is, to be hung out of use, like rusty mail in monumental mockery. I speak to you in a style of authority, but pardon me; as I am afraid that, from some humble motive or other, you will not do what I could wish, and what I know you are capable of.

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"You are not aware, perhaps, what interest I have in my attempting to incite you; no less than the honor of having roused a sleeping genius into action.—But I must conclude with my sincerest wishes for your health and welfare.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your friend and humble servant,

"PETER ROMNEY."

"Excuse haste and let me hear from you very soon, and what you have new and strange since I left Lancaster. I heard from my brother in London lately—he is very well. There is an account of his picture* in the Public Ledger for yesterday."

That what he has said of Pickering did not arise from any mean and illiberal competition on his part, is manifest from the candid manner in which he speaks of Wright, who had forestalled him at Liverpool; for in another letter, dated Liverpool, Nov. 5th, 1769, he says: "I have about a dozen pictures in hand here, but what further encouragement I shall meet with I cannot judge. Mr. Wright, a famous painter from Derby, is here, who swallows up all the business. He is indeed a true copier of nature: he is of a studious disposition, has a fine taste, and is, in short, qualified for a portrait-painter of the first class; but he seems to want a certain force of feeling, and strength of conception necessary in history-painting."

He continued at Liverpool only a short time, and then returned to Manchester, where his long residence and distinguished talents had acquired him the esteem and friendship of all the most eminent literary characters in the place. The Rev. Doctor Assheton, Fellow of

* The picture of Mr. Leigh and family—see page 53.

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the Collegiate Church, and the learned Doctor Perceval were among his more select friends.

With a mind so organized as Peter's was, it is no wonder that he should again become entangled in the snares of love, a passion which has oftener been the bane of great and noble minds, than the intemperate aspirations of ambition. It would appear from the following elegiac stanzas, which I found among his papers, and which I beg leave to insert here, not from any peculiar merit that they possess, but simply, to illustrate the turn and character of his mind—that he had cherished an attachment for a Miss Shuttleworth during the more early part of his residence at Manchester, which, however, does not seem to have met with a corresponding return on the part of the lady.

"Beneath the deep and gloomy shades
Of Strangeway's woody park,
Whilst from the eye the twilight fades
And all around grew dark;

Remoral overcharged with love,
And burthen'd with despair,
Pacing regardless thro' the grove
With loose dishevel'd hair,

Thus to the woods and winds declares
The sorrows of his heart,
To soothe the anguish of his cares
And mitigate their smart.

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"Ye woods and winds and darken'd skies,
O listen to my woes,
And not like Shuttleworth, despise
The passion I disclose.

Her matchless charms I have ador'd
A long and ling'ring year,
Told her my love, her love implor'd,
But all in vain, I fear.

For deaf as rocks or roaring seas,
And cruel as the grave,
She treats me with indifferent ease
And smiles to see me rave.

And shall I bear her scornful smiles,
Nor from her presence fly?
No.—In the far Hesperian isles
I'll seek felicity.

Farewell then, too enchanting fair,
My dearest love, adieu,
To worlds unknown I now repair
Far from all bliss and you.—

Yet what avails if I should rove,
My labour would be vain;
For, absent from the maid I love,
I still with her remain.

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With her I could delighted roam
O'er regions far and wide—
Each place would be to me a home
If she was by my side.

With her no country could offend,
No season seem severe,
For with her wheresoe'er I wend
Her presence would me cheer.

Ah ! what avails all pomp and pride,
And all that earth can give,
If cruel fate should us divide
And she not with me live.

This then would be my destiny,
If living from my dear,
The peopled world would be to me
A desert lone and drear.

Cease then, my love, thy cruel scorn,
Nor wound my tender heart,
Let me not be like one forlorn,
The butt of Cupid's dart."

After his return from Liverpool he fell into the society of a young lady of the name of Brierley, whose attractions were so powerful that they soon eradicated from his heart all remains, if any, of his former love; and he wooed her with such zeal and assiduity, that a mutual attachment was the result of their intercourse. In the fervour of

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passion, when every thing seems possible to an enthusiastic lover, and exaggeration and vanity are the necessary ingredients in a heated imagination, he wrote the following complimentary verses.

To Miss Brierley.

"A certain painter on a day,
As antiquated stories say,
Would paint a *Venus* quite complete,
In every part most exquisite.

But he, I fancy, could not find,
Amongst the train of woman kind,
One blest with ev'ry charm divine
With which he meant his piece should shine.

Therefore, his purpose to achieve,
He chose and pick'd out virgins five
For diff'rent beauties most renown'd,
That could in all the place be found.

One blest with an enchanting face,
Another with a matchless grace,
This had a shape that all might prize,
The fourth, fair skin, the fifth, bright eyes.

The virgins to the painter sit,
From each he drew as he saw fit;
And from their beauties all combin'd,
At length a perfect piece design'd.

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But had he flourish'd at this day,
And seen my matchless Brierley,
As fine a piece he might have drawn,
And as complete, from her alone;

For in her join each charm and grace
Dispers'd among the female race;
A perfect model she'd have been,
Worthy to sit for Beauty's Queen.

The day will come, I hope, when I
Shall prove this is no flattery;
But by the *piece* I shall display,
Drawn from my dearest Brierley.

Give demonstration, clear as light,
That in her every charm unite
Which heav'n did ever yet bestow
Upon *one being* here below."

His feelings were now worked up to the highest pitch of sentimental enjoyment, and permanent felicity seemed to await him as the necessary result of their meditated union. But alas! the partition which separates joy from sorrow is often so thin and fragile, that it is easily broken down by contingencies beyond the controul of man. The lady in all the bloom of youth, soon sickened, and died of a rapid consumption, that fallacious but fatal disease so apt to prey upon youth and beauty. By this distressing event all his flattering hopes were converted into the anguish of despair. His feelings were so severely wounded that he could no longer endure to continue at a

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place where every thing that met his eye, was only a renewal of unavailing regret; yet, notwithstanding, he could not separate himself from the portrait of his love, but took it with him, and continued to preserve it till his death; and though it is not so beautiful as *Venus*, it certainly is the representation of a fine looking woman, and is delicately and sweetly painted.—He, therefore, quitted Manchester in June 1770, in a state of mind bordering on distraction, and wandered over the mountains which separate Lancashire from Yorkshire, regardless of external objects, and indifferent as to the way he should take, being conscious, as he said in a subsequent letter, that he could not be more miserable whithersoever he might go. He might have said, in the language of a congenial spirit,

——————Ogni mia gioja
Per lo suo dipartire in pianto è volta
Ogni dolcezza di mia vita è tolta.

Petrarca, Canzone 40.

And it might have been said of him, in the words of another tender poet,

Fuggì tutta la notte, e tutto il giorno,
Errò senza consiglio, e senza guida,
Non udendo, o vedendo altro d' intorno
Che le lagrime sue, che le sue strida.

Tasso.

At length, after two months, when his grief began to subside, and his mind to recover its tone, he met with an acquaintance who kindly recommended, and introduced him to several sitters in the neighbourhood of Bradford. He says in the same letter "I have finished fifteen pictures, and so much to the satisfaction of all parties, that I

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have already three times as many to do in consequence. They are all in crayons, which is the manner I design wholly to pursue, as it is not only more expeditious, and more pleasing in effect than oil colours; but different from my brother's, and greatly in fashion."—Here seeking to extinguish his former flame by the influence of a new one, he began to pay attention to the sister-in-law of his friend and patron, which not being quite agreeable to the lady's friends, he immediately withdrew from this new scene of disappointment and mortification, and again became a disconsolate wanderer.

———the slight bias of untoward chance
Makes his best virtues from the even line,
With fatal declination, swerve aside.

Southey.

The repeated violence thus done to his feelings so unhinged his mind, and brought on such depression and melancholy, that he neglected his profession for a time, and became involved in debt and difficulties: these, like offensive weeds growing upon a rich soil, so obstructed the tender growth of genius, that it became blighted and unproductive. Those precious hours, which should have been devoted to the study of the highest branch of painting, were barely sufficient to procure him subsistence; so that when any accidental circumstance occurred to interrupt or prevent employment, want was the inevitable consequence: thus his life was a continued struggle with difficulties, aggravated by the simplicity of his heart and his high feelings. How he fought his way through them I know not; for from the time when he quitted Yorkshire till we find him established at Ipswich, there is no letter or document from which any information can be obtained. What occurred at the latter place will appear from the following letter addressed to his brother George at Rome.

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Cambridge, June 10th, 1774.

"Dear brother,

"I have at length taken up pen to write to you, but before I proceed, I must entreat you not to suffer your mind to be hurt by the reasons of my silence, which I hope are now in a fair way of being terminated.

"All my endeavours, together with the encouragement I met with at Ipswich, were not sufficient to secure me from being arrested and cast into prison by Messrs. Allwood and Murray*. It is unnecessary to dwell on particulars. Mr. Greene thinks their conduct imprudent and weak. To distress me at a time, and in a place, where I had not without some pains and expense, established a very extensive reputation, not only as a painter, but as a man, and had above twelve months' business bespoke, which I had no more to do than to finish with all expedition. When I might have had the first recommendations to whatever place I pleased. But this was not to be, especially in the manner I had planned it. My arrest was so public that it was known by every body directly—and greatly astonished some, but grieved and afflicted, I believe, all the ladies and gentlemen, who had employed me. They would have got me bail, but as that would have increased expenses, without gaining me any real advantage, I refused the offer, and went to limbo. When, at length, I was released by the generous contributions of the ladies and gentlemen in and about Ipswich, who had with much to do, persuaded my plaintiffs to come to some compromise.

"My principal patron was a Mr. Lambert, professor of Greek at Cambridge, the lover of Miss Lambert that died; for whom I drew

* Picture frame makers.

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her picture. He came to see me, and finding I was the painter of his favourite, that became an additional motive for him to serve me —which he did, and continues so to do to his utmost. I came with him to Cambridge about a month ago, and have begun above twenty drawings in black and white chalk, at three guineas a piece, and all amongst the first people here.

"Though my imprisonment has lost me the opinion of a few people not worth having, it has interested several in my behalf, who would not otherwise have taken any real pains about me; and these happen to be of the first distinction, both ladies and gentlemen, and some noblemen.—I am sensible I have drawn the eyes of the world upon me, and it behoves me both out of regard to myself, and in gratitude to my patrons for their generosity, to exert myself with all my powers, and to observe my conduct with the greatest prudence.—I only lay in the heads, that I may have full employment in the vacation, which will soon commence. I have no fear of not having plenty to do when the young fellows return, because they will not only be less busy, but less poor.—Cambridge is a very delightful place.—Do not let any thing I have told you, mortify you, or be the cause of depressing your spirits.—Be so obliging as to let me hear from you shortly, and tell me what you are doing, &c., and you will extremely oblige your

"Affectionate brother,

"PETER ROMNEY."

"P. S.—I have much to say to you, but cannot now spare time, as I have not a moment (of daylight particularly) to spare. Amongst the noblemen, I have drawn Lord John Clinton; Lord Pelham, and I believe Lord Hyde will sit to me; also Lord and Lady Mont-

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ford, besides three or four younger sons of noble families. Also Colonel Wilson and his lady, and Doctor Watson and his lady, who was Miss Wilson of Dallam Tower.—I have met with a great number of young gentlemen out of the different counties where I have been. Young Casson went from the university about a week after I came, for which I was sorry, as his acquaintance are of the first rate; though several of them are now absent, particularly Lord Ferrars and the Marquis of Granby; the last I believe is in Italy, but is expected here soon to be proposed as member for Cambridge."

His disappointments and embarrassments having destroyed the equilibrium of his mind, he sunk into irregularity. By clandestinely calling in the aid of spirituous liquors* to counteract the morbid melancholy that preyed upon his spirits, he only aggravated the evil which he wished to subdue. Cambridge town, in the long vacation, was the worst place he could have chosen for his residence; for, want of employment and the expensiveness of the place were circumstances, with regard to him, incompatible with each other; and being pressed hard for payments before the return of the term, he was obliged to withdraw from the place and seek a retreat in London. In the beginning of the year 1777, his brother George having paid his debts and furnished him with all requisites, he was sent to Stockport with strong recommendations. He was going on well there, and had painted some excellent portraits in crayons; one I remember seeing of a Mr. Dale, a leading manufacturer of the place, who, I believe, afterwards removed to Lanerk. His constitution, howe-

* "With the powers of his mind languid or ruffled, the man of genius, to restore their activity and soothe their commotion, too often resorts to artificial means: alcohol and opium are both subservient to his purpose."—Doctor Stuart's Essay on Genius and its diseases. Med. and Phy. Journal.

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ver, was shattered, and death, perhaps in mercy, removed him from this scene of trouble by a sudden and unexpected attack in May 1777, before he had completed his thirty fourth year.

I may, perhaps, be censured by some for having given this brief outline of his unfortunate life; but it seems to me to be required in some measure as supplementary to that of his brother. I think, also, that such memoirs may sometimes be of use in cautioning young artists of superior genius, who are so liable to be misled by the delusions of the imagination, and the impulse of their feelings, against the danger of such indulgencies. Youths endowed with such rare faculties, and exposed to the temptations of an unfeeling world, are like light skiffs upon the wide and dangerous ocean, the sport of every blast and storm; and any twinkling light, however dim, may sometimes, perchance, be of service in guiding them from the impending danger; for valuable indeed is the cargo, but light and unsteady the ballast. If what I have related should induce any wealthy individual to rescue from distress one suffering genius, or should contribute in any degree to promote a general disposition to patronize indigent but talented men; I shall have effected an important object, and instead of censure, deserve praise. This account may likewise prevent any mistake in attributing to Mr. Romney the pictures by his brother. He was well qualified to have coped with Cotes as a crayon-painter; but the true bias of his genius would have led him to cultivate the highest branch of the art—but, alas! he had neither patrons nor money for that purpose.

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DEDICATION

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

IN 1776.

TO MR. GEORGE ROMNEY.

"WHILST you was engaged in contemplating those wonderful productions of ancient art, which ITALY is enriched with, I was tracing the ruder beauties of nature in a domestic tour thro' the mountainous parts of WESTMORELAND and CUMBERLAND. You carried out with you a disinterested passion for your art, with faculties which this country hath rarely given birth to; and you return from your travels with some specimens of so auspicious a sort, that, when encouragement shall provoke your genius to its full display, we are persuaded you will take rank with the first masters of the highest province and best age of painting. I set out on my expedition with no other pretensions than a devout respect for Nature in her sublimest shapes, and some small leanings towards the Muse; not enough to make our intercourse the talk of posterity, but barely sufficient to fill up the hour. The fruit of my tour hath been, what I fear is

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scarce worth laying at your feet, the following Irregular Ode, which was literally struct out on the spot, and is addrest to the Sun; for as the season was far advanced towards winter, we had frequent temptations to invoke that luminary, who was never very gracious to our suit, except whilst we were viewing the lake of KESWICK and its accompaniments.

"If I should be asked why I give that to the world and you, which I really think scarce worthy the acceptance of you and the world, I have only to answer, that if the honest pride of the Friend did not draw it into public, the idle vanity of the Poet would be well content to spare the Press its pains: but the gratification of saying how much I respect your genius and esteem your virtues, finds it an easy task to overcome the remonstrances of Judgment, or the terrors of criticism.

"Mr. GRAY, whose faculty of describing can give life to scenes which I should have conceived nothing but the pencil could convey, hath left behind him a Journal, for which we are indebted to his candid friend and editor. This Journal refers to all the scenes hinted at in the following Ode; and being a book in every body's hands, makes it unnecessary for me to trouble the Reader with any attempts of my own by way of notes, which with the best poems seldom accord, and in my instance might have been a hazardous experiment.

"How it came to pass that this enchanting display of sublime and beautiful objects could extort nothing more than a prosaic description from a poetical pen, I am at a loss to guess. I have been favoured with a Manuscript of the late ingenious Dr. BROWNE, which I had the privilege of inserting in this publication, and should so have done,

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but that I found it had already got forth into the world, and was in print. It is touched with great spirit, and in a glowing style, which gradually kindles till it breaks forth into the following rhapsody, which I believe hath hitherto escaped publication:

"Now sunk the Sun, now Twilight sunk, and Night
Rode in her zenith; nor a passing breeze
Sigh'd to the groves, which in the midnight air
Stood motionless, and in the peaceful floods
Inverted hung: For now the billow slept
Along the shore, nor heav'd the deep, but spread
A shining mirror to the Moon's pale orb,
Which, dim and waining o'er the shadowy clifts,
The solemn woods and spiry mountain-tops
Her glimmering faintness threw: Now every eye,
Oppress'd with toil, was drown'd in deep repose;
Save that the unseen shepherd in his watch,
Propt on his crook, stood listening by the fold,
And gaz'd the starry vault and pendant moon;
Nor voice nor sound broke on the deep serene,
But the soft murmur of swift-gushing rills,
Forth-issuing from the mountain's distant steep,
(Unheard till now, and now scarce heard) proclaim'd
All things at rest, and imag'd the still voice
Of quiet whispering to the ear of Night.

"*In fine,* says Dr. BROWNE, *this accumulation of beauty and immensity tends not only to excite rapture but reverence; for my part I make an annual voyage to Keswick, not only as an innocent amusement, but a religious act. I walk forth in this stupendous scene,*

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as into the grandest earthly temple of the Creator; and as I take my progress thro' its several parts, often break forth with the divine Psalmist in that grateful exclamation—"O LORD, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all."

"What I have here inserted is taken from a letter to a friend, and is a valuable specimen of the author. As for the minute delineations, which some travellers affect to give of scenes that come under their contemplation, they seldom convey to my apprehension any map of the place they describe. To you perhaps, whose pictures are language, language may be a picture; and as I know you can paint our very words, words may in return paint that to you, of which a less intuitive mind takes no conception; the bulk of mankind however collect little from these descriptions but the amusement of reading them; and the most they can effect is to refresh the memories of them, who have been on the spot, or to inspire those, who have not been, with a resolution of going thither. And in truth a more pleasing tour than these lakes hold out to men of leisure and curiosity cannot be devised. We penetrate the *Glacieres*, traverse the *Rhone* and the *Rhine*, whilst our own domestic lakes of *Ulswater*, *Keswick*, and *Wyndermere* exhibit scenes in so sublime a style, with such beautiful colourings of rock, wood and water, backed with so tremendous a disposition of mountains, that if they do not fairly take the lead of all the views in Europe, yet they are indisputably such as no English traveller should leave behind him, provided he be one, who, with my *Atticus*, loves

"To follow nature in her simple haunts,
With early steps to climb the shaggy side
Of some hoar cliff and meet the dewy breath

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Of morning, issuing from the flowery vale:
Or soft reclining on the mossy turf
Careless to lie, and, as the dimpling brook
Steals gently on, with motionless regard
To eye the floating mirror; while as fast
Down Meditation's smooth and silent tide
In easy lapse his tuneful moments fall,
Clear and untroubled as the passing stream."

"But the views of our young travelling gentry, as you must well know, are not thus directed: on the road they are couriers; in the cities they are revellers: Whilst they are journeying there is no respite nor repose; their enquiries extend neither to right hand nor left, and seldom further forward than to the next *poste*; the shortest and straightest road to dissipation and pleasure is their's, all the rest is out of the way; but if their course should necessarily carry them to any thing curious in nature, if their road should compel them to the banks of a torrent, or the brow of a mountain, they are asleep, or it is dark night and they cannot see it, for they are in haste, and want to be at the next great noisy town. And now begins the plan of all their operations; here they lay in their stock of new cloathes, new taste and new opinions; in return for which they barter away all their little fund of money, modesty and religion. Here they walk thro' palaces of pictures with as much edification as a boarding school girl would thro' the Museum, or an upholsterer thro' the Vatican. They have been told of the *gusto* of the *antique*, but where to find it, or how to distinguish it, they know no more than their mothers: Virtù however is to be purchased, like other superfluities, and in the end their *Cicerone* lays them in for a bargain, perhaps a patch-work head of *Trajan* set upon a modern pair of shoulders, and made up with *Caracalla's* nose and *Nero's* ears,

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Aut curios jam dimidios, humerove minorem
Corvinum, aut Galbam auriculis nasoque carentem.

"Thus equipt with these imperial reliques, with a veritable daubing of *Raffaelle*, copied from the very print which is given to prove its originality, and a huge *cameo* on the little finger, home they come privileg'd *Virtuosi*, qualified to condemn every thing that their own countrymen can produce; and thus having contributed all that in them lies to disgrace their native land, they conclude their career by affecting to despise it. It is in vain that a native artist exhibits to their view the models of a *Mars* and a *Venus*, such as I am bold to say would have done credit to *Athens* in its purest age; they may* moulder in his shop for them, unless indeed they have lost a leg or an arm in the ruins of *Hadrian's* villa, and then they would purchase them at twice the cost of the whole figures,

Miranturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit.

"I should be much misunderstood if this was not thought to be said with all due exceptions; much more, if I was supposed insensible to the general uses of travel: this would be only combating one prejudice with another; let both be cast aside, and men and things considered in their true light. There are to be found (and may their numbers multiply!) protectors of living genius, who will admit the *Orpheus* of *Dance* and the *Ugolino* of *Reynolds* into their choicest cabinets; and I trust there will be found, with whom your Graces will find an honourable station; for sure it would be a very antipatriotic prejudice to admit the vulgar drabs of the Flemish, or

"* It is superfluous to say this points at MR. BACON; the reader of taste will be sorry to know that these beautiful models have brought nothing but reputation to their maker."

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the theatrical dames of the Italian artist, in preference to a fairer and a chaster progeny, for no better reason than because those were foreigners, and these of English parentage:

Indignor quicquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum inlepideve putetur, sed quia nuper:
Nec veniam antiquis, sed honorem et præmia posci.

"This is a depravity of taste that does real injury to the genius of the nation, and should for that reason be combated by every* weapon that can serve to root out so noxious an infatuation.

"I am, &c. &c.

"R. C."

"* The readiest weapon for this office is ridicule. Comedy could not be better employed than in holding up to view a character of the above description; such prejudices militate as much against antient Art and Science as against modern: I wish some of my brother dramatists, who have more leisure than I have, would accept and improve upon the hint."

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WHEN I alluded to the Essay by Mr. Payne Knight, (see page 138,) I had only read a page at the beginning, and from that inferred that it was dry and metaphysical: I have since perused it, and found it not only interesting and instructive, but very clever; and such as should not by any means be withheld from the public. I do not concur with the writer in every passage, but think there is much that will be useful to artists, and out of their usual course of reading.

To Mr. Romney.

"Dear Sir,

"I remember that when I had the pleasure of conversing with you last, I promised to send you my thoughts upon the different modes of interesting the passions in painting. Now I come to consider the subject maturely, I find it so difficult, and the passions so involved with the other faculties of the mind, that I almost despair of being able to reduce them to any certain rules. In examining the human mind we must consider it as composed of four distinct faculties, the senses, memory, reason, and passions. Some have added the will, but I rather look upon it as an effect produced by an impression upon one or more of the other faculties. The senses may be considered not only as the vehicles of all knowledge, but as the sources of the very existence of the other faculties; for it is by them that we acquire all ideas, and without ideas the mind would be no more a real existence than motion without matter. Next to the senses is the memory or store-house of the mind, which not only retains the sensual impressions, but also those of the passions, and the results formed by reason.

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The reason, or reflective faculty, shows us what may be from what has been, and how each object of the senses exists by comparing the different impressions it makes upon different organs of sense. When this is licentiously used it is called imagination or fancy, and has been generally treated as a distinct faculty, though in reality it is only a modification of reason and memory. If it was a distinct faculty we should be able to form notions that have no relation with the sensual impressions; whereas the most extravagant flights of the most extravagant imagination, when we come to examine them accurately, are only combinations and abstractions. We can multiply and diminish and vary forms to infinity, but we can have no idea of matter without form, nor can the most boundless imagination define any modes of existence for a new element. If we examine minutely into all the fables of poets or painters we shall find that they have some relation to what really exists. The passions, the most obscure faculty of the mind, are so blended with each other, that it is difficult to distinguish the primary and simple ones from those which are only modifications or effects. The primary passions appear to me to be pride, anger, love, joy, sorrow, and fear. All the rest seem produced by these, as envy and ambition by pride, jealousy by love and pride and fear. Hatred is the reverse of love and may more properly be termed a sensation than a passion, as it generally begins from disgust. Courage is either a coarseness of organization, and want of sensibility, or arises from pride, love, or anger, and even sometimes (paradoxical as it may seem) from pride and fear, as when the fear of dishonour or love of superiority is more powerful than the fear of death.

"There is besides another kind of passions which may be termed reflex, as when we catch the feelings of others and appropriate them

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to ourselves. The most observable of these is pity, when the external expressions of grief transfuse the sentiments which cause them from one person to another. The same effect is observable in all the passions, and is called sympathy. How it acts is altogether unknown. Particular passions, such as rage and terror, have been observed to pass through a whole people from no other causes than a particular tone of voice or cast of features expressive of those passions. These expressions are natural and not acquired as articulate sounds are; hence in all societies, and all climates, they are nearly the same. Even those of animals have a resemblance with those of man, particularly their plaintive tones. It is to these reflex passions that the painter, as well as the musician, must attend. He must endeavour to give those casts of features and positions of limbs, that are expressive of the passions he wishes to transfuse into the breast of the spectator. This is only to be acquired by a long and accurate study of nature. He must discover the physical effects of each particular passion upon the human frame, and the particular forms or faces that are more or less subject to such passions. It would be impertinent in me to offer you any observations in detail upon this branch, as you must necessarily have made them yourself. It is a kind of knowledge that is only to be acquired by experience, and even that without study and attention will sometimes lead into error. Many modern artists have not been careful enough to distinguish mental or passionate sorrow from sensual pain, though their effects upon the body are absolutely different. Mental sorrow produces a careless position of the limbs, a sullen and fixed look, and a general languor and repose through the whole frame. Bodily pain, on the contrary, contracts the nerves, distorts the features, swells the veins, and makes the eyes appear glaring and distracted. It is also necessary to be particularly attentive to the difference between pain, and that

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languor and relaxation of the whole body which immediately succeeds it; when the fibres having lost their elasticity, are no longer capable of suffering. The first is finely marked in the Laocoon and the last in the dying Gladiator. To endeavour to show the physical effects of each particular passion upon the body, would carry me beyond the bounds of a letter, besides its being a subject to which description is not adequate. What I wish most to examine is that kind of pleasing awe and veneration which we feel upon viewing those kind of objects which we call sublime. This appears to me to arise from a mixture of pride and fear.—We are elevated and terrified at the same time.—We transfer the greatness and superiority which we see in another to ourselves at the same time that we are inspired with a secret awe and respect. There are two kinds of objects in painting which produce this sentiment which we call sublime. As they act upon different principles and in different modes, I shall consider them separately, and for distinction's sake call the one infinite and the other finite. The first is when a single object is expressive of boundless strength or power; or when a number of objects appear in succession, and extend beyond the reach of sight. The mind is led beyond the sense and lost in the infinity of space. Salvator Rosa has excelled all other painters in this kind of sublimity. His picture of Saul and the Witch of Endor at Versailles is the greatest effort of imagination. It shows a boundless extent of phantastic objects which the mind grasps at in vain. This kind of sublimity is more for the poet than the painter. The certainty of lines and colours removes that dubiousness, and recalls the imagination from wandering into infinity. Hence the most sublime descriptions of Homer, Virgil, and Milton become ridiculous when painted. Tasso says that God sat in the throne of eternity, and under his feet were fate and nature; and motion and time. How much of its grandeur would this noble

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passage lose if a painter was to particularize the allegorical persons. The infinite sublime may sometimes be produced in landscape. A river winding between vast chains of mountains, such as we sometimes see in the works of Salvator Rosa, leads the mind beyond what the eye sees. The figure painter who produces all his effects by expression and attitudes must generally be content with that kind of sublimity which is within the bounds of sight. The modern artists have generally failed in this from working upon wrong principles; they have endeavoured to produce the desired effect by forms instead of expression. Lines, however varied, will never inspire awe or reverence, except the general character of the figure shows a conscious greatness, which by sympathy is transferred into the breast of the spectator. It is a wrong notion that Michael Angelo first introduced, that sublimity consists in large figures and far-fetched attitudes. If one analyzes the finest statue in the world, it is no other than a mass of brass or marble. To suppose that there is any thing awful in the forms themselves is as absurd as to find sublimity in the fashion of a coat. The sublime in painting consists in expression, not in forms. An easy negligent attitude, that shows a mind above trifles, entirely occupied with great and exalted thoughts, has more true greatness than all the researched attitudes of the Florentine school. The mind catches the feelings it sees expressed in the picture or statue. Every contortion out of ordinary nature rather lessens than increases the effect. It shows an attention to trivial things, and seems as if the hero was anxious about the position of his person. All the vastness of muscles, or strength of limbs, will not make Hercules look like a great conqueror, if his attention appears to be employed about his attitude, which it must be when there is any thing in it different from ordinary nature. The Moses, the most easy and natural of all Michael Angelo's works, is the most

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sublime. The ease and negligence with which he sits, show a mind occupied with remote cogitations,—unmoved by any sensual impressions. The imagination naturally magnifies what it cannot clearly comprehend, and when the attention seems fixed upon objects unknown to us, we naturally suppose those objects great. The tombs of the Medici, at Florence, have done more in corrupting taste, than even the pictures of Pietro di Cortona. Parts of them are so exceedingly fine,—the figures of Lorenzo de Medici and the Aurora are so animated and so expressive of true greatness, that people in the warmth of admiration, have confounded the beauties with the defects, and have imitated the latter, when they were not able to reach the former. You must have observed, during your abode at Florence, the figure of St. Mark by Fra Bartolomeo, in the Pitti palace. Perhaps it is the most perfect example of true sublimity now existing. Every thing shows ease and majesty. His attention seems occupied in great thoughts, which yet have not the power to ruffle that tranquil superiority which he seems to possess. Large colossal figures have been another source of false sublimity. While the artist represents real and not imaginary beings, it makes little difference whether he represents them three, or three hundred, feet high. The mind reduces the colossus and miniature equally to the standard of nature, before it feels their effects. The greatest quantity of marble cannot make a mean character appear great, nor the smallest, a great one contemptible. The little picture of the vision of Ezekiel, is perhaps the most sublime of all Raphael's works. I think myself that the ordinary size of nature is the best for expressing the sublime and beautiful, as the impression upon the mind is more instantaneous. We associate the idea of the picture or statue with what it represents so rapidly, that the act itself escapes the attention.

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"You have, without doubt, read Mr. Burke's book on the sublime and beautiful. I esteem many of his observations very much, but cannot conceive what he means by sublime smells, or indeed sublime sensations of any kind. Sublimity appears to me to affect only the passions. All sensual impressions are totally of another class, for which reason I have been so particular in distinguishing the different faculties of the mind. All authors that I have read upon the subject, have in some measure confounded them.

"A single figure is more proper for the sublime than a groupe. Parts, though ever so judiciously connected, distract the attention. The same simplicity is to be observed in the colours as in the composition. All glare of tints, or even the ordinary variety of nature is to be avoided. Every affection of the senses weakens the affections of the passions. Beautiful colouring, or any thing that is pleasing to the sense, exhilarates the mind, and is consequently improper for the sublime which disposes us to be serious. Perhaps Andrea del Sarto's colouring is the best adapted to grand subjects, as it aims at nothing but harmony. In expressing the passions with dignity, great care should be taken to avoid running into extremes. In exalted minds the most violent agitations never produce any extravagant contortions, either of limb or feature. Amidst the agonies of grief and pain, or the exultations of joy, a great man will ever preserve the superior majesty and sublimity of his character. Julius Cæsar was so solicitous in his last moments to preserve it, that he wrapt his face in his cloak, lest any signs of pain or fear should discover the weakness of human nature. A great mind should appear to feel deeply, and yet suffer boldly. One contemplates such an object, with a mixture of pity and reverence, one feels at the same time, a kind of sympathetic elevation of spirits, in seeing human nature in its most exalted state,

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and exerting with dignity its noblest faculties. The dying Hercules of Guido, and more particularly the Laocoon, are excellent examples of this kind. Virgil in his description of the death of Laocoon, has much degraded his character, by making him cry out. The sculptor with more judgment has represented him stifling his voice, and struggling with pain. Every nerve seems convulsed with agony, but the breast being expanded, and the throat compressed, show that the breath is restrained, and that he suffers in silence.

"In the expressions of passions, not only different degrees of the same passion have very different effects, but also the same degree in different persons. This variety is finely described by Tasso, where the death of Clorinda is told in Jerusalem. The grief of the women dissolves into tears and lamentations, that of the old Arsetes becomes fixed in a silent melancholy, and that of the brave Argantes bursts into indignation and protestations of vengeance. In such subjects the painter should be particularly careful to avoid all niceties of dress or ornament. His dresses ought to be simple drapery without any relation to modes or qualities. A rigid attention to the customs of times and places draws the attention to trifles. The ancients discarded it from the portraits of their own times, and the dresses one sees on the statues of Augustus, Trajan, and the Antonines have seldom any resemblance with those which they really wore. It would be much for the advantage of the arts if the moderns would allow the same liberty.

"It has been already observed that imaginary beings are in general improper for painting, as they almost always owe their sublimity to a certain obscurity which the exactitude of the pencil entirely removes. The witches of Macbeth are very sublime when we read the

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play, but become ridiculous, when represented on the theatre. When the fancy is not confined within the fields of vision, it wanders beyond the bounds of nature, but when its objects are subjected to the organs of sense, the illusion vanishes. The greatest descriptions of the poets are generally obscure hints, which rather rouse than satisfy the imagination. The painter must remember that this is the infinite sublime, and consequently beyond the reach of his art. Those who have had the boldness to attempt it, have generally degraded instead of exalting the images of the poets. They have by confining them within the bounds of lines, made the infinite finite. The figure in the vision of Ezekiel, is perhaps the most sublime that imagination can conceive, if considered only as a human figure; but when one compares it with the descriptions of the prophet, and considers it as representing the Being who fills all space and lives through all time, it becomes mean and inadequate.

"There is a grandeur and sublimity in animals of the brute creation, especially those of the more savage kind. Some have supposed this to arise from a degree of terror which they inspire. This may have some effect, but certainly is not the sole, nor even the principal cause, or a scorpion or tarantula would be more sublime than a horse or an elephant. The most terrible animals are not those which fill the mind with that kind of pleasing awe and reverence, which we feel from a sublime object, but those whose appearance is most expressive of dignity. It is not the lion's teeth and claws which inspire it, or a serpent, or mad dog would in a superior degree. It is the majesty of his port, and the commanding ferocity of his eye. A fine horse is one of the grandest of all animals, though we fear nothing at all from him. The same sympathy which makes one man catch the feelings of another, makes us catch those of animals. There are certain looks

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and gestures, which by a certain mechanic impulse, inspire particular passions prior to any acquired ideas. A child soon after his birth will smile and stretch forth his hands when one looks at him cheerfully; sorry and endeavour to conceal himself when one frowns and looks angry. The same effect is observable in many other young animals, particularly dogs. Some men have possessed such a ferocity of countenance, as to terrify the fiercest of the animal creation, merely by their looks. It is not to be supposed that the animal reflects and conceives an idea of the superiority of that particular man over any other, but that a kind of mechanic impulse—a contagious panic seizes him. These effects are painful when really felt, and yet become pleasing when felt by sympathy. In the first instance we are terrified by the greatness and superiority of the object—in the second we sympathize with, and are elated by that very greatness and superiority. To explain this more clearly, we must draw examples from poetry. The jealousy of Othello, and horrors of Macbeth would be painful if really felt, and yet how pleasing are they when well represented. The cause is that we sympathize with the effects of those passions, rather than with the passions themselves. It is not the jealousy but the distress occasioned by it, that melts us in Othello, nor is it with the horrors of guilt that we sympathize in Macbeth, but the courage and endurance with which he bears them. Many have thought it extraordinary that the same distresses and afflictions should be pleasing when represented, which would be painful were we to see them really suffered by others. I am inclined to think that the pain we feel for the distresses of others is merely an effect of social refinement, and that in a state of nature our sentiments would be much the same, as we feel at the theatre, attended with a secret joy. The histories of all ages show that men are naturally cruel, as well as all other animals of prey, for whenever they have possessed unlimi-

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ted power, they have always used it to the destruction of others. If a wolf gets among a flock of sheep he will kill as many as he possibly can, though a single one were more than sufficient to satisfy his hunger. We find in the histories of the ancient Gauls and Germans, as well as in those of the American savages, that whole nations laid waste their own country, and sallied out in quest of some other, merely for the pleasure of ravaging and destroying. What is the pleasure of hunting or shooting but the gratification of that love of slaughter?

"I find my subject leading me insensibly farther than my first plan, which was only to give you my thoughts upon the passions, as far as they relate to your profession; but the human mind is so great a subject, that when one begins it is difficult to tell where to end. I have often formed a plan for a complete theory of all its faculties, but I find the execution of it above my strength. I would have begun with the senses, and considered them as the means by which we acquire all ideas, and the organs which unite all nature in one great and complex machine. I would then have examined the nature of sensual pleasure and pain, with their influence upon, and connection with the other faculties of the mind. From the senses I would have gone to the memory, and have endeavoured to show the mechanism of recollection and invention, the boundaries of imagination, &c. In considering the understanding, I would have traced as accurately as I could, the nature and extent of human knowledge, the means which facilitate or impede the acquiring it, with the modes and extent of associations and abstractions. The passions would have afforded a still more extensive subject for enquiry. Their connection with the physical organs, their modes of acting, their different degrees and different effects upon different constitutions, their influence in the pleasures

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we receive from poetry, painting, and music; the whole moral system of man in his various connections natural and civil, would all come under this head.

"It is now some years since I have quitted these kind of speculations, and devoted the little time I give to study, to history and morality, sciences that are more likely to be useful to me. I should not have troubled you with these loose thoughts had it not been your desire, and the hopes of giving some hints that may be useful to your art. You will excuse inaccuracies, and remember that I write as a traveller without books or memorandums.

"I am most sincerely yours,

"R. P. KNIGHT."

Rome, November 24th,
1776.

STEPHEN TYSON, PRINTER, KING STREET, ULVERSTON.

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ERRATA.

P. L.
9—25, *for* judgement *read* judgment.
10—16, *for* befel *read* befell.
12—9 & 23, *for* Gardner *read* Gardener.
27—21, *for* Wattean *read* Watteau.
37—26, *for* over *read* upon.
47—20, *for* unpatronized *read* unpatronised.
54—9, *after* one day *put a comma.*
15, *for* Reynold's *read* Reynolds.
57—13, *for* forever *read* for ever.
58—9, *for* is standing by her, and apparently, *read* and standing by her, is apparently.
68—19, *for* muses *read* Muses.
77—28, *for* frize *read* frieze.
100—9, *for* Raffaele *read* Raffaelle.
118—21, *after* school of *insert* the.
119—24, *put a comma after* however.
120—8, *for* of *read* off.
123—19, *for* Milns *read* Milnes.
137—20, *dele* afterwards, *and in line* 22, *for* just at the time *substitute* afterwards.
138 & 197, *for* Paine *read* Payne.
143, *for* Crispigny *read* Crespigny, and in ult. *put a comma after* perhaps.

P. L.
146—11, *before* interesting *insert* extremely.
151—2, *dele* guineas.
154—8, *for* Tourdain *read* Jourdain.
155, *for* Pilkinton *read* Pilkington.
198—14, *for* Seamstress *read* Semstress.
in penult. *for* Clonfort *read* Clonfert.
212—1, *for* Reynold's *read* Reynolds'.
216—26, *for* Carrardine *read* Carwardine.
220—22, *for* appendage *read* appennage.
223—25, *for* Fitzackley *read* Fazakley.
229—6, *put a comma after* after.
238—24, *for* It having now, however, become *read* But it having now become.
245—21, *dele* a *before* sufficient.
248—2, *for* tranquilizing *read* tranquillizing.
254—20, *dele comma after* uneasiness.
262—16, *dele comma after* design.
271—8, *after* extract *insert* from a letter.
305—12, *put a comma after* Brierley.
310, *for* Ferrars *read* Ferrers.
311—18, *for* patronize *read* patronise.
330—4, *for* sorry *read* and cry.

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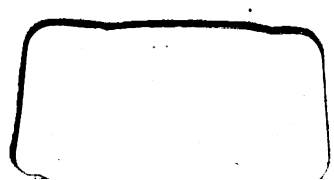

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